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1956 and the Collapse of Stalinist Politics of History: Forgetting and Remembering the 1942 Újvidék/Novi Sad Massacre and the 1944/45 Partisan Retaliations in Hungary and Yugoslavia (1950s–1960s)*

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Two acts of mass violence that occurred during World War II have strained relations between Hungarians and Serbs for decades: the murder of several thousand civilians in Novi Sad (Újvidék) and the surrounding villages in January 1942, committed by the Hungarian army and gendarmerie, and Tito's partisan army's mass killings and incarceration of tens of thousands civilians, most of them Hungarians, at the end of the war. Remembering these atrocities has always been difficult and strongly politicized, but this was particularly the case when the Communist regimes in Hungary and Yugoslavia based the legitimation of their authority on anti-Fascist narratives and interpretations of the war. The conflict between Stalin and Tito, and the anti-Stalinist revolution of 1956 made it even more difficult to propagate the original Stalinist narrative about the war, which stood in ever starker contrast to everyday realities. When Kádár began to revise the political justification of his regime with a narrative that was both anti-Fascist and (moderately) critical of Stalinism in the 1960s, the remembrance of the 1942 massacre changed. In Yugoslavia, the weakening of the central government in the 1960s contributed to a local re-appropriation of the memory of 1942, while the 1944 killings remained a strict taboo until 1989.

Keywords: Stalinism, memory, Word War II, anti-Fascist narrative, war criminals, partisans, Tito, Kádár, 1956

Recently, representatives of the Hungarian and the Serbian states expressed their regret for atrocities committed against each other's nation during World War II.[1] The most notorious of these acts of mass violence was the infamous mass murder in the course of anti-partisan raids in the region of Bačka (Bácska) in January 1942, when the Hungarian army and gendarmerie killed about 3,300

* Thanks to Thomas Cooper for his meticulous proofreading of this article.

1 President János Áder spoke in the Serbian parliament a week after the assembly had adopted a declaration apologizing for the atrocities against Hungarian civilians at the end of World War II. See: „Hungary's Ader apologises for WWII crimes in Vojvodina," *Visegrad-Group,* May 26, 2013, accessed November 09, 2016, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/news/hungary-ader-apologises. See also: „Hungarians commemorate 1944–45 massacre in Vojvodina village," *Daily News Hungary,* October 25, 2013, Accessed May 13, 2016, http://dailynewshungary.com/hungarians-commemorate-1944-45-massacre-in-vojvodina-village/.

civilians, mostly Serbs and Jews, between 900 and 1,300 of whom were killed in Novi Sad (Újvidék). Less than two years later, Yugoslav partisans drove out Hungarian and German troops. Over the course of the fall and winter of 1944/45, the partisans killed thousands of civilians (exact numbers are still not available), not exclusively of Hungarian and German background, but also real and alleged "collaborating" Serbs, Croats, and others. Some of the atrocities were "justified" as measures of retaliation for the massacres committed by the Hungarian authorities in 1942.[2]

While the Novi Sad massacre was discussed internationally and nationally roughly since the moment it was committed and then more intensively after World War II and again in the 1960s (and, most recently, in 2011, during the trial of Sándor Képíró, a gendarmerie officer involved in the massacre), the atrocities committed by the Yugoslav army in 1944/45 were an absolute taboo in Yugoslavia and Hungary until the end of Communism.[3] The reasons for this discrepancy will become clearer in the course of this study.

In the Communist period, these acts of mass violence represented challenging events for the historical representation of World War II for both regimes. Their legitimacy rested on anti-Fascist narratives of the war and the heroic struggle of Communist resistance and national liberation, particularly in Tito's Yugoslavia. In these narratives, anti-Semitic or interethnic motivations of mass violence played minor roles.[4] The conflict between Stalin and Tito added further complexity to the official attempts to deal with the difficult chapters in the history of World War II. After the outbreak of the 1956 revolution and the temporary collapse of the Stalinist system, it finally became impossible to return to this master narrative of World War II. Once Kádár had taken complete control after the brutal suppression of the opposition in the late 1950s, a new, more flexible interpretation of World War II had to be provided.

In the following, I will first describe how the Hungarian and Yugoslav government tried to monitor the memories of the 1942 atrocities and the 1944/45 retaliations immediately after World War II. At the time, most of the commanding officers responsible for the 1942 massacre were put on trial and

2 In Vojvodina alone, according to a commission of the Autonomous Province led by Professor Dragoljub Živković, around 110,000 people were killed between 1941 and 1948. Of these, about 56,000 were murdered by the occupying powers during the war, but around 54,000 were killed *after* the liberation. Cf. Branka Dragovic-Savic, "Seeking the truth in Vojvodina," *EUObserver,* March 19, 2010. See also: Živković, ed., *Imenik stradalih osoba ap Vojvodine.*

3 Mák, "Szigorúan tiltották."

4 Cf. also: Rév, *Retroactive Justice,* 230.

executed at a time when war criminals were being punished all over Europe. In this context, the atrocities that partisans had committed against Hungarians, Germans, and others at the end of the war in Yugoslavia in 1944/45 were given a completely different meaning and status than the massacre of 1942. In contrast to the Novi Sad massacre, which was broadly covered by the press during the trials and a constituted topic of publications in both countries, even the survivors and family members of the victims of the atrocities were not allowed to speak about them.

The next part of this article analyzes how the Stalinist regime in Hungary and Titoism in Yugoslavia dealt with the memories of the war atrocities between 1949 and 1953, in a period of open conflict between Stalin and Tito. It also briefly describes the erection of a monument dedicated to the victims of the 1942 massacre in Novi Sad in the context of the Yugoslav rift with Stalin at a time when the memory of the Holocaust in Hungary had become mostly the "private" affair of a small minority.

I then look into the changes related to representations of the 1942 massacre in the years immediately following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, in an attempt to analyze how the dramatic events and the experiences of revolution and military intervention influenced the commemorations of World War II. Finally, I will briefly look into the changes in policies in both countries, which were results of de-Stalinization and international events, such as the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem or the crisis of the Yugoslavian federal system in the 1960s.

My intention is to shed light on the complex entanglement of world war memories in Hungary and Yugoslavia by focusing on two acts of mass violence, one in 1942 and one in 1944/45. The 1942 Novi Sad massacre was, to some extent, related to the Holocaust in Hungary and similar atrocities all over German-dominated Eastern Europe, especially the nearby Independent Croatian State, the German-occupied Yugoslavia, the Ukraine, the Baltic States, and other parts of the Soviet Union attacked by Germany and its allies. The retaliations of Tito's partisans which occurred in 1944/45 against Hungarians, Germans, and others, on the other hand, were bloody reactions to war crimes committed by Hungarian and German troops after the collapse and occupation of Yugoslavia. In part, they were also motivated by the wish to create an ethnic South Slavic majority and thus a continuation of the inner-Yugoslav civil war. The fact that Hungary had lost the war while Yugoslavia was among the victorious allies also had a strong impact on the memory/forgetting of both events. As such, they have been treated completely separately from the 1942 massacre. But as I will

argue here, these crimes were related to each other, and they are still related in the memories of Hungarians and Serbs today.

Another problem related to this topic is the fact that little study has been devoted to the memory of the atrocities. As of now, there are no studies on the memory of 1942 in Novi Sad, and there are very few on the memory of World War II and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia.[5] While the memory of the Holocaust in Hungary has been studied more often, almost all studies complain that there is a lack of secondary literature on the topic.[6]

Trials and Executions. The Immediate Post-War Years 1945–49

At the end of 1946, the commanding officers of the 1942 raid, together with representatives of the local Hungarian elites, were executed in Novi Sad and nearby locations.[7] After these executions, diplomats from both countries worked on improving relations between the two states. However, the Hungarian government's hope that the demonstrative punishment of war criminals and the gesture of cooperation with Yugoslav authorities could result in more benign treatment of Hungary at the Paris peace negotiations turned out to be too optimistic. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 basically reestablished the borders of Trianon.

The war crimes trials related to the 1942 raids, which were held at the People's Courts in Budapest and in Yugoslavia, made extensive use of the materials that had been collected by the Military Court at the Chief of Staff in the months after the massacre in 1942.[8] At the time, these legal proceedings

5 For war and Holocaust remembering in Yugoslavia, see: Kerenji, *Jewish Citizens;* Karge, *Steinerne Erinnerung – versteinerte Erinnerung;* Szerbhorváth, "A jugoszláviai holokauszt emlékezete."

6 For an overview of Hungarian Holocaust memory see: Laczó and Zombory, "Between Transnational Embeddedness and Relative Isolation"; Bohus, "Not a Jewish Question? "; Fritz, *Nach Krieg und Judenmord.*

7 On October 26, 1946, the Hungarian-language newspaper *Magyar Szó* reported on "A bácskai razziák felelőseinek bűnpere". See also: Jenő Györkei, "Nemzeti szeretetlenség" [National cold-heartedness], *Magyar Nemzet Online*, January 12, 2002.

8 Today, this material is lost. In April 1942, military court prosecutor Colonel Dr. József Babós, under orders by Chief-of-Staff Szombathelyi, began his meticulous investigation, which resulted in a report seven hundred pages long and concluding that a mass murder had taken place. During the German occupation, Babós went into hiding, and the Arrow Cross arrested some of his family members. In 1947, he gave testimony during the People's court war crimes trial against General Jány, but on September 29, 1947, the court noted that "he was a fugitive." The Communists had begun to investigate his activities against Communists under Horthy. Cf. Varga, "Forradalmi törvényesség." In connection with the trials, see: Zinner and Róna, *Szálasiék bilincsben,* 1:48–73. For an overview and analysis of the people's courts, cf. Karsai, "The People's Courts."

and the indictment against General Feketehalmy-Czeydner and 14 other officers had been a provocation for Hitler, who granted political asylum to the four main defendants shortly before the occupation of Hungary in March 1944.[9] The people's court trials were thus a continuation of these proceedings, in contrast to other post-war war crime trials.

The propaganda that accompanied the war crime trials demonized the suspects as "Fascist thugs," "psychopathic," "sadistic" "criminals," and it highlighted a few facts and witness accounts.[10] The massacre of 1942 was used in a number of war crime trials because a great deal was known about it on the basis of the thorough investigations that had occurred under Horthy in the spring of 1942. During the trials, the judges and the political representatives also used the characterization of the "psychopathic" war criminal in order to proclaim that the real victim of the war was the "Hungarian people." In the trial against General Feketehalmy-Czeydner, the commander of the operation in Novi Sad in 1942, the political people's prosecutor, György Marosán, a Social-democratic politician, interpreted the Novi Sad massacre as a "defeat of the Hungarian nation," which had lost "more than a war; … its honor and reputation."[11] According to Marosán, the "true accused" were not Feketehalmy-Czeydner or Grassy, but the whole system and the elite of the Horthy regime, the "noble gang," which had suppressed and betrayed the innocent Hungarian people.

In the context of the post-war trials, Tito had asked for the extradition of the officers responsible for the Novi Sad massacre. His request was granted by the Hungarian government. However, he also requested that Horthy himself be handed over. In this case, Stalin vetoed his demand.[12] A public trial of Horthy in Yugoslavia would have strengthened Tito's reputation as the leader of the most

9 Braham, *The Destruction,* doc 64, 117–18.

10 Cf. Karsai, "The People's Courts."

11 Zinner, Róna, *Szálasiék bilincsben,* 1:283. György Marosán (1908–92) was a baker, who rose during the 1930s to the higher ranks of the trade unions of bakers. After 1945, he was a member of the Politbureau (1948–56), and he also served as the President of the Yugoslavian–Hungarian Friendship Society and had various other high positions during the Communist period. Cf. *Új Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon* (Budapest: Magyar Könyvklub, 2002), 4:527–28.

12 Stalin considered that Horthy had at least attempted to switch sides before the end of the war, that he had begun armistice negotiations in Moscow, and that he was, after all, "an old man." Cf. Haraszti-Taylor, "Why Was Admiral Horthy not Considered a War Criminal?"; Sakmyser, "Miklos Horthy and the Allies, 1945–1946."

successful European partisan movement of World War II. Stalin was becoming increasingly suspicious of Tito's political ambitions.

The 1945/46 war crimes trials therefore had different functions in Hungary and in Yugoslavia. The Hungarian government wanted to demonstrate that the country had become a democracy and that it wanted to break away from its Fascist past. In Yugoslavia, World War II had a different character. It had been not simply a heroic fight led by Tito's partisans against the occupying powers under German leadership, but also a bloody civil and ethnic war between Croatian, Serbian, and other nationalists. Therefore, the war crimes trials were supposed to show the triumph of a unified, multi-ethnic partisan movement against foreign occupiers who had victimized the Yugoslav people and against inner enemies and traitors. The new Yugoslav regime, so the promise went, would overcome all ethnic tensions and conflicts. In this context, any talk of the atrocities committed by the partisans against Hungarian and other civilians in the aftermath of the collapse of the occupation had to be silenced.

"Fascists" on Both Sides of the Border: Stalinism and Politics of History and Memory in Hungary and Yugoslavia at the Height of the Stalin–Tito Conflict

While establishing one-party dictatorships in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Hungarian and the Yugoslavian Communist leaderships established historical narratives of World War II which were supposed to stabilize and legitimize the new regimes and, at the same time, direct the focus of society towards the socialist future. The preamble of Hungary's constitution of 1949 (its first written constitution) was based on an absolute dichotomy between the "reactionary past" and the "progressive socialist future," and it declared that the future was only safeguarded by submission to the hegemony of the Soviet Union:

> The armed forces of the great Soviet Union freed our country from the yoke of German fascism, crushed the infamous power of the landowners and wealthy capitalists, and forged the path of democratic progress for our working people. In hard battles with the masters of the old order and their defenders, the Hungarian working class came to power and rebuilt our war-torn country in alliance with the working peasants, and all with the selfless support of the Soviet Union.[13]

13 Cf. 1956 Institute, accessed February 19, 2016, http://www.rev.hu/sulinet45/szerviz/dokument/1949.evi3.htm.

Instead of stability, the Stalinist years in Hungary were marked by a latent civil war, for the radical attempt to transform society along Soviet lines could only be implemented through the destruction of political, social, and cultural institutions, ideas and mentalities that had characterized the country before 1945. The Stalinist constitution of 1949 can thus be seen as a kind of utopian social blueprint that had to be forced through owing to social resistance. The Constitution of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia of 1946, radically amended in 1953 and replaced by a new constitution in 1963, was similarly based on Stalin's constitution of 1936.[14] Unlike the Hungarian constitution, it did not contain any reference to the war or the Soviet Union, in part because Tito and the partisans had won the war mostly independently and had enjoyed strong support from a large part of the population, in contrast to the Hungarian Communist Party. However, the 1946 Constitution declared that it was the "expression of the unanimous will of all the peoples of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia," reflecting the principle of "brotherhood and unity" (*bratstvo-jedinstvo)* that Tito had proclaimed in order to solve or just cover up ethnic tensions and conflicts.[15]

In both cases, the memory of the war (the ritualized and rhetorical forms of this memory) was strongly oriented towards the future of the socialist state.[16] The 1942 raid in Novi Sad and some of the surrounding villages and the 1944/45 retaliations in particular represented complicated, delicate topics. On the one hand, both regimes could refer to the 1942 massacre as an example of "Horthy Fascist" brutality, and both could relate the perpetrators to the broader context of Nazi (and capitalist) imperialism. Some of the Hungarians who had, in 1942, protested against the massacre together with the heroic Communist partisans were now celebrated as examples of the good, progressive forces of history.[17] Thus, the most prominent anti-Fascist Hungarian hero in both countries became Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky of the Independent Smallholders Party, who had publicly protested against the 1942 massacre and had demanded

14 Cf. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias*, 169. The text of the 1946 constitution: accessed May 12, 2016, http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslavia_1946.txt.

15 On "brotherhood and unity," cf. Godina, "The Outbreak of Nationalism." 413–15.

16 For Yugoslavia, see: Karge, "Mediated Remembrance," 51.

17 However, Zombory, the Police Chief of Novi Sad, and Fehrenbach, the High Sheriff (főispán) who had also protested, were executed in 1946 as representatives of the occupying administration. The fact that they had organized the deportation of the Jews from Novi Sad did not play a role in this.

that the commanders be punished.[18] A few weeks after his protest, the Novi Sad massacre became widely known internationally.[19] Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was arrested immediately after the German occupation of Hungary and later hanged by the Arrow Cross government.[20]

All of the Communist Parties in Europe (including Western Europe) propagated historical narratives of World War II, representing it as a struggle between the good popular forces of anti-Fascism against evil Fascism defined *"as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital."*[21] This ideological perspective on history made it difficult to discuss openly the role played by nationalism and racism during World War II. This partly explains why, beginning in 1949, the Holocaust slowly began to disappear from public discourse.[22] Antisemitism was just a minor, if detestable, ideology of this brand of Fascism, but it was not really seen or cast as central. The Hungarian people, like the Communists, were victims of "Horthy-Fascism."[23] Furthermore, as Judit Pihurik has observed, for Hungary—in contrast with Yugoslavia—the fact that the country had participated in the war against the Soviet Union as "Hitler's last ally" was the "original sin" of the Horthy era, and the Communists used this fact of history to fashion enemies.[24]

In this context, the White Terror of 1919–20 during the rise to power of the Horthy-regime was merged with the Holocaust and the atrocities of World War II in order to create a continuous "Fascist" period. In a book published in 1951, two leading communist historians emphasized this continuity:

> Thus, in 1919 and 1920, *it was not merely the seeds of fascism which appeared in Hungary, but rather fascism itself*. In the Hungarian fascism of the twenties and forties, not only the fundamental idea but even the participants were the same. In 1919 in Orgovány and in 1942 at the massacre in Újvidék the same Horthy stood at the helm; … . The same people, the

18 For a short biography of Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, see: Vígh, "Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky." His memorandum to Horthy is published in: Tilkovszky, "Ütött a cselekvés utolsó órája."

19 "Hungarian Atrocities," *The Times*, June 10, 1942, 5; "Hungarian–Serb Battle Cited," *New York Times,* July 16, 1942, 7; *Jewish Telegram Agency* (JTA), Bulletin vol. 9, no. 104, May 8, 1942.

20 The cult around his martyrdom began as soon as his dead body was brought in a procession to Budapest. Cf. Fisli, "A 'nemzet halottja', 1945" See also: Lévai, *Hősök hőse...! Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Endre, a demokrácia vértanúja.*

21 Dimitrov's 1935 phrase is quoted in: Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the Right,* 142.

22 Cf. Fritz, *Nach Krieg*; for Yugoslavia: Kerenji, *Jewish Citizens*, Karge, *Steinerne Erinnerung.*

23 Quoted in Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity,* 111–12.

24 Pihurik, "A háborús múlt."

> same crimes: from 1920 to 1944, our history has a direct road to the reign of terror of the Arrow Cross hordes.[25]

At the same time, the people's courts, which had been officially established in order to put war criminals on trial, were closed. On April 1, 1950, the People's Court in Szeged, the last functioning people's court, ceased its activities, after 15 courts had already been terminated in 1948. Although the regime continued to initiate trials against less prominent war criminals, some of which were related to the Novi Sad massacre, these trials did not get much media attention, and in many cases took place in secret. These mostly secret legal proceedings were part of the routine of the Stalinist suppression, which during the period between 1949 and 1953 affected tens of thousands of Hungarians in various ways.

Also, some of the officers involved in the 1942 raids had escaped. Sándor Képíró, one of the patrol commanders during the 1942 raid, began a new life in Argentina.[26] Gusztáv Korompay, who had admitted during the military trial of 1943/44 that he was involved in mass shootings of civilians for which he was not punished, escaped and probably went into hiding in West Germany.[27] Less fortunate were those gendarmes who had been caught by the Red Army at the end of the war, or handed over to the Soviet Union by the US Army. They spent mostly between five and ten years in various Soviet labor camps, and, when they returned to Hungary after Stalin's death, the Hungarian State Security Authority imprisoned them again in camps or put them in jail.[28] While the regimes suppressed all kinds of real and imagined opposition, many war criminals were integrated into the Stalinist system. The murder of half a million Hungarian Jews and the suffering of other groups during the war were mostly silenced. The 1950s were marked in all countries—in Eastern and Western Europe, the United States, and elsewhere—by a new phase of forgetting the

25 Karsai; Pamlényi, *Fehérterror*, 71–72. Quoted in: Apor, *Fabricating Authenticity*, 101. My accentuation.

26 Cf. Zétényi, *A Képíró-ügy*, 184–214.

27 A Lutheran pastor who married a woman named Ilona Korompay in Budapest in 1943, asked his brother-in-law, Gusztáv Korompay, in Germany in 1945 to take care of his two small children, which he did until 1957. This could be just a coincidental similarity in names, but the same pastor was also taking care of the burial of Colonel General Gusztáv Jány, the commander of the 2nd Hungarian Army, who was executed in 1947 (exonerated by the Hungarian Supreme Court in 1993). Cf. "Balikó," *Evangélikus élet;* Gárdos, *Nemzetvesztők*, 197.

28 The former First Lieutenant Gerencséry was sentenced by the Military Court in Budapest in August 1951, after he had also returned from a Soviet POW camp. Cf. HL, BTK 2925/1951. Two other former gendarmes were put on trial in August 1953 and received sentences of 15 years in prison for war crimes. Files of the trial in the Budapest Capital Archive were kept secret: BFL, XXV.4.f – 0343 – 1953.

war and the Holocaust.[29] Everywhere the rebuilding of society, the creating of families, and economic and social questions gained precedence. In this new phase, gendarmes and soldiers who were not put under observation by the State Security or arrested, as well as Jewish survivors and the large part of Hungarian society were seeking to integrate into society. In other words, they were seeking a new beginning.

Communist propaganda now targeted new types of enemies, which were also indiscriminately defamed as "Fascists."[30] After the wave of revenge and retaliation in the immediate post-war years, accompanied by the practice of the Communist party of integrating into its institutions of power a large number of "little" Arrow Cross Party members, some of whom became active in the secret police, new repression campaigns began in the late 1940s in a context of a hysterical war paranoia.

The split between Stalin and Tito, who had been close allies at least until 1947 and who shared ideological convictions, was provoked by Tito's expansionist policies towards Albania and by his reluctance to accept Stalin's idea of a close, centralized structure of the Communist camp in Eastern Europe, dominated by Moscow.[31] A few months later, the US government decided to support Tito against Stalin.[32] For Stalin's followers in Eastern Europe, this was treason, and it could only mean that Tito had always been an enemy, a secret supporter of imperialism and even of fascism, who had hitherto only hidden his "true face."

Instead of war criminals, it was now communist leaders who sat in the docks of courts. Even those who had worked tirelessly for the Stalinist cause, such as the former minister of the interior, László Rajk, who was responsible for the killing, torture, and imprisonment of thousands of enemies of the regime, was now an "enemy." In order to "prove" the connection between Rajk, "Titoism" and "Horthy Fascism," the State Security unit which organized the show trial arrested, among many others, a former gendarmerie officer who had been working against the Germans at the end of the war, accusing him of organizing the alleged coup d'état against the communist regime.[33] The judge at the trial was the same person who had previously led the proceedings against officers and administrators charged with organizing the deportations of Jews, a fact that

29 Judt, "The Past Is Another Country."

30 Examples in: Gyarmati, "Ellenségek és bűnbakok."

31 Perović, "Tito–Stalin Split."

32 Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*.

33 Cf. Hodos, *Show Trials*, 60.

shows how radically the priorities of the Hungarian law enforcement authorities had changed in only two years' time.[34] Party leader and strongman Mátyás Rákosi clarified in *Szabad Nép* on June 8, 1949: "Today's Yugoslavia is a typical police state in which the Trotskyite clique keeps its grip on power through *Gestapo* methods and with the help of their *Gestapo* agents. … At every turn we will unmask the Tito gang as traitors and agents of imperialism." Just as Stalin was a symbol of the Eastern Bloc's unity in the minds of the respective national party elites, Tito now embodied the enemy. He was cast as a man who consorted with "imperialists" and "fascist powers."

The conflict between Stalin and Tito and Rákosi's strong engagement in it created a difficult situation for the remaining Hungarian minority in Novi Sad and the Vojvodina, as well as for the South Slavic minority in Hungary. On November 29, 1949, a new Hungarian radio program was inaugurated, Újvidéki *Rádio*, broadcasting from Novi Sad.[35] The new radio program got immediately involved in this ugly propaganda war, fighting against the "lies" of the Hungarian State Radio *Kossuth*, which had begun to attack Tito vigorously in the context of the show trial against László Rajk in the summer of 1949. Radio Kossuth had already introduced or extended programs in Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian. While the Yugoslavian leadership was concerned about "Cominformists" among the Hungarian minority, which numbered roughly half a million people, the Hungarian authorities on the other side of the border were afraid of Yugoslavian agents, especially among the small South Slavic minorities.[36] Because of these concerns, a group of Yugoslav Hungarian communists were arrested and put on trial in Novi Sad as spies in April 1949.[37] Tensions between armed units rose at the border, and there were numerous incidents involving Hungarian and Yugoslav border guards.[38]

The mistrust and animosity between the two communist regimes had a strong influence on how they dealt with problems deriving from the past, and

34 Judge Péter Jankó (1907–55) committed suicide in 1955, when the rehabilitation of Rajk began. The background of the rehabilitation was, among other considerations, that Hungary could improve its relations with Yugoslavia, two years after Stalin's death. Between 1950 and 1953, he had been the leading member of the Supreme Court in Budapest. "Jankó Péter." *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon.*

35 Révész, "Az ellenségkép-modellek."

36 Banac, *With Stalin against Tito,* 216–17; Ludanyi, "Titoist Integration."

37 *Borba*, April 4, 1949.

38 It is difficult to gauge how serious these incidents were, but they are documented in the pages of *Magyar Szó* during the early 1950s, the Hungarian-language newspaper of the Yugoslav Communist Party, published in Novi Sad.

the past itself became a subject of dispute. In 1950, Moša Pijade (1890–1957),[39] one of Tito's closest collaborators and a leading figure in postwar Yugoslavia, tried to convince the Hungarian minority that the Yugoslav Communist Party had been benevolent from the outset:

> I still remember our difficult situation at the end of the war and the beginning of our immediate final liberation. There were people then who thought that we should treat the Hungarian national minority harshly. However, my fellow Yugoslavians, we had from the first moment on the strong conviction that we have to fight against any symptom of nationalism. …. Therefore, my fellow Yugoslavians, when those who are under the command of Moscow outside our borders try to defame us by claiming that we suppress the national minorities and that we don't give them rights, schools, nothing, it is the usual defamations of chauvinists who want to inflame chauvinism among the national minorities.[40]

However, those who had *not* forgotten the atrocities committed by the partisans may well have understood this statement to have meant something resembling the following: let us forget what happened at the end of the war and focus instead on the principles of our minority policies, because the Stalinists in Hungary only want to undermine the new beginning, which brought better minority rights for you. Consequently, the massacre of 1942 was also not mentioned in the publications of the Hungarian minority. The mass violence of the war could not be incorporated into the new narrative of *Brotherhood and Unity*.

The task of fostering and shaping the memory of the war lay in the hands of partisan and veterans' organizations.[41] Although they produced politically controlled narratives of the "people's war of liberation" or of the "socialist revolution" which represented the main foundation for the legitimation of the regime, Heike Karge distinguishes these narratives from the "diverse social practices of communicating and performing the past of the war in society"

39 Moša Pijade (1890–1957) was a painter and leading member of the Communist movement in Yugoslavia since 1919. In 1941, he joined Tito's liberation movement, and as of 1942 he was a leader of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). After the war he was president of the federal parliament. See: Serbs Who Marked the 20th Century. *Biographical Lexicon* (Belgrade: n.p., 2006), 407.

40 *Magyar Szó*, March 24, 1950.

41 Karge, *Steinerne Erinnerung*, passim.

on the local level.[42] The *Federation of Fighters of the war of the People's Liberation in Yugoslavia* (SUBNORJ), the official representative body of the partisans, was closely linked to the communist party. The organization concentrated on the erection of monuments and offered different forms of remembering: as mourning of deaths, mostly in local settings, but also as (tourism) business, artistic engagement, social commitment, or, rather dominantly, as pedagogical mission. The social practices of arranging memory excluded many surviving victims of the war from public support who could not be classified as "fighting partisans," especially members of the Jewish population. Since the late 1950s, however, the category "participant in the people's war of liberation" was extended to victims who were not "stained" by collaboration, still excluding the Hungarian victims, but including the shrinking Jewish community.[43]

The politics of remembering also mirrored the ideological clash with Stalin. In 1952, a new board was founded, responsible for the "identification and restoration of historical sites of the people's war of liberation." This led to the erection of the Tito monument at *Titovo Užice*.[44] This could be understood, at least to some extent, as a reaction to the huge statue of Stalin built in Budapest on the occasion of Stalin's 70th birthday in 1949. At the moment when the Communist leadership declared that the Soviet leader was "the greatest Hungarian" the Stalin cult reached its peak.[45] As a consequence, the toppling of the huge statue became the most important act of symbolic liberation from the tyrant during the days of triumph of the Hungarian revolution in late October, 1956. The Yugoslav Communist party journal *Borba* mocked the elevation of Stalin into the pantheon of Hungarian history, and this was noticed by the temporary Hungarian chargé d'affaires in Belgrade, József Kovács.[46] Reporting to the Foreign Ministry in Budapest, Kovács complained about "infamous attacks" in the Hungarian-language press against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, and he claimed to have seen the growing influence of US imperialism in the socialist country. Kovács went so far as to accuse the Titoist "Fascists" of continuing to commit atrocities against the Hungarian minority, referring to the murderous

42 Ibid., 11.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 110.

45 The Hungarian State Security launched investigations against people who had asked why a Hungarian was not celebrated instead of Stalin. MNL OL 276/89/162, doc. 274. For an excellent analysis of the statue dedicated to Stalin in Budapest see: Sinkó, "Rituals."

46 MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-19f-00380-1952. Accessed February 16, 2016, http://adattar.vmmi.org/fejezetek/1000/10_1952.pdf.

acts at the end of the war. In a report dated April 17, 1952, Kovács compared the situation at the time with the situation at the end of the war:

> The Yugoslav Communist Party under Titoist control never fought to realize the Leninist idea of the nationalities policy, neither during the war nor after the war. Immediately after liberation, when the Soviet liberating troops continued to chase the Fascists, the invading Yugoslav partisans carried out huge 'cleansing' operations among the minority population in the entire Vojvodina. They were not at all driven by the class standpoint when, for example, they dragged off hundreds or thousands of Hungarians from their houses, drove them out of their businesses, locked them up in internment camps where many died, and even shot many before they had even arrived at the internment camps. [...] We can see all of this again today. […] The Hungarian minority schools suffer from a terrible lack of school books.[47]

The hysterical clash between the two communist propaganda machines reached a new climax in the summer of 1952, when *Borba* claimed in an article that the Hungarian authorities would carry out "genocide" against members of the South Slavic minorities in the border areas with Austria and Yugoslavia, hinting at atrocities committed during the occupation.[48] The journal opined that:

> Rákosi's agents have, with regard to their anti-national crimes, already exceeded long ago the Horthy feudalists and the Szálasi Fascist gendarmes. The national Yugoslav minority in Hungary has become a defenseless target of Stalinist-type genocide. An example is the gradual and systematic resettlement and extermination of seven thousand Slovenes who live in the areas near the Austrian–Yugoslav–Hungarian border.

The quotations above demonstrate that terms like "Fascism" and "genocide" had become almost completely meaningless in the Stalinist language in *both* countries in the propaganda referring to the crimes committed during the war.

At the same time, in 1952, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the massacre, its public commemoration in Novi Sad entered a new stage with the erection of a monument in the Jewish cemetery, not far away from the center of the town. The cenotaph in Novi Sad was one of five new monuments built to

47 MNL OL XIX-J-1-j-1a-00133-1952. Accessed February 16, 2016, http://adattar.vmmi.org/fejezetek/1000/10_1952.pdf.

48 Accessed February 19, 2016, http://adattar.vmmi.org/fejezetek/1000/10_1952.pdf.

commemorate the Jewish victims of World War II, initiated and organized by the Federation of Jewish Communities and supported by the federal government in Belgrade.[49] All five monuments were situated inside Jewish cemeteries, not in public locations. The ceremonies in Novi Sad lasted for two full weeks, and they were attended by Yugoslav state and Party officials and Israeli and U. S. Jewish delegates. They were also fully covered by the Yugoslav mass media. A year later, Andreja Deak (1889–1980), a Yugoslav military doctor of Hungarian–Jewish background and a Communist since 1919 who had barely survived the 1942 massacre, published a short story about the raid.[50]

The ceremonies and the press coverage in Novi Sad marked a difference compared to the dwindling presence of any ritualized expressions of the memory of the Holocaust in Hungary at the time. Representatives of the Hungarian state tended to eschew those events.[51] While in 1948 a representative of the president of the state, even if not a prominent one, was still present during the inauguration of the memorial to the martyrs in the Jewish part of the new central cemetery in Budapest, in 1954/55 not one state official showed up for the commemorations of the 10th anniversary of the German occupation and the deportations of the Hungarian Jewry. Such ceremonies had become "private" events.[52]

In Yugoslavia, the official support for the commemorations and the invitation of representatives from Israel and the United States were related to Tito's attempt to establish a place for the country within a broader international context that included capitalist countries.[53] At the same time, this act of commemoration of 1942 was only possible because the Jewish victims' story had been included in the foundational myth of Titoist Yugoslavia, according to which all ethnic groups had turned into "martyrs of the war of liberation," with no specific indication of the circumstances under which this had taken place or

49 Emil Kerenji, "Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944–74." PhD diss., University of Michigan 2008, 117.

50 Andreja Deak (1889–1980) was born in Szigetvár, Hungary. In 1919, he became a member of the Hungarian Communist party. A year later he moved to Yugoslavia, where he worked as a doctor. He was interned by the Hungarian army but survived the war and became a high ranking officer in the military medical administration, until he was promoted to the position of General. His short stories were published in German as: *Razzia in Novi Sad und andere Geschehnisse während des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Ungarn und Jugoslawien* (Zürich: Werner Classen, 1967). The short stories first appeared in 1953 in Serbian under the title *"Pod žutom trakom"* (Under the Yellow Star).

51 Fritz, *Nach Krieg und Judenmord*, 235–36.

52 The neglect of the topic can also be demonstrated by the isolation of one of the few Holocaust scholars in Hungary at the time, Jenő Lévai. See: Laczó, "The Foundational Dilemmas of Jenő Lévai."

53 Lampe, "Yugoslavia's Foreign Policy in Balkan Perspective."

the people who had committed the killings. This was necessary in order to gloss over the fact that many of the victims of the war had been killed because of ethnic or political conflicts between the various Yugoslav factions. The fact that, in the meantime, the Jewish population of Novi Sad had shrunk stood in stark contrast to the public inauguration and the presence of international guests and the media during the erection of the monument. After hundreds had emigrated to Israel, there were only 372 Jews left in 1950, compared to more than 4,000 living in the town before 1941.[54]

After Revolution: A "Fascist Plot" or Rákosi's Failure?

After the crushing of the 1956 revolution, the most immediate problem for the new Communist leadership under János Kádár was to gain acceptance as the legitimate government inside and outside the country. The fact that its power was based on invading Soviet troops weighed heavily on it. One way to reacquire credibility, at least from the perspective of the Hungarian Communist government, lay in the denunciation of the uprising as a "Fascist" plot, supported by imperialist powers in the West. This was, at least among some circles inside the country but also for some orthodox Communists outside its borders (who feared a return of the "most reactionary forces"), a plausible explanation and justification of the unrestricted use of force against any opposition. In this context, the labelling of the "enemy" as "Fascist" was supposed to justify the exclusion and, in many cases, the execution or incarceration of people identified as real or potential enemies, since these "elements" were regarded as a threat to human society that had to be destroyed. This changed only slowly, with the amnesties in the early 1960s, which were, in part, related to a compromise with the United States that was reached with the hope of bringing an end to the country's diplomatic isolation.[55]

Before that, the Kádár regime staged a number of trials against members of the former gendarmerie and army officers based on the Stalinist construct of a continuity of "Fascist" crimes between 1919 and 1956.[56] As of 1958, some 22,000 persons had been arrested, 229 of whom were condemned to death. About 200,000 people had left the country for the West. It was only in 1963,

54 Jewish Telegraph Agency, December 13, 1950.

55 Kastner, *Ungarn 1956 vor der UNO*.

56 Numerous examples in: *The Counter-revolutionary Conspiracy of Imre Nagy*. See also: Pihurik, "A háborús múlt."

when a general amnesty was proclaimed, that the situation in the country finally settled down. By then, 367 persons had been executed.[57] Especially in the trials against former gendarmes, the judges made an attempt to put an ugly "Fascist" face on the narrative of the "counterrevolution." About 140 former officers were indicted and sentenced during this period.[58] Among them, the former army officer János Nagy was put on a list of "Fascist Terrorists, Arrow-Cross Men, War Criminals, Robbers and Murderers Let Loose on the Country" in 1956.[59] Nagy was identified as "a leading figure of the massacre which took place at Újvidék in 1942," without any mention of the fact that a People's Court had already sentenced him in 1948 for this act.[60] When he was released in 1956, he had already served almost eight years in prison. Nothing was said about the specific crimes he had allegedly committed in 1956 except the fact that he had come out of prison. The connection between the "Fascists," "War criminals," and those who had been active during the revolution of 1956 was in most cases only suggested, not proven. However, in most cases it was very difficult to link the persons and deeds committed during the Horthy period or in World War II to activities related to the revolution of 1956.[61] Until 1961, 33 former gendarmes were executed, 26 of whom had been convicted first and foremost for "crimes" allegedly committed in 1956.[62] The Ministry of the Interior supported the judicial campaign by collecting a 17-volume-strong "documentation" that was supposed to prove that numerous "Fascist" groups had been active between 1945 and 1956.[63] In this context, references to the 1942 Novi Sad massacre could be integrated into the narrative because the judges could make use of the substantial investigation files produced by the military court in the Horthy period.

Kádár and his supporters, however, did not just want to go back to the Stalinist regime. Rather, they attempted to create a new socialist dictatorship, which was distancing itself from both "Fascism" and Stalinism. Kádár himself

57 Kovács, "Csendőrsors Magyarországon 1945 után."

58 Békés, "A Kovács-dosszié."

59 *The Counter-revolutionary Conspiracy of Imre Nagy*, 62–63. This list was first used in the form of a leaflet published in late 1956. A photo of the leaflet can be found at: http://www.mek.oszk.hu/04000/04056/html/roplap/pdf/roplap1956_1109.pdf.

60 *The Counter-revolutionary Conspiracy of Imre Nagy*, 63.

61 Cf. Rév, *Retroactive Justice,* 222–30.

62 Békés, "A Kovács-dosszié." Numbers according to: Kovács, "Csendőrsors," 131. See also: Szakolczai, "Háborús bűnösök," 29–52.

63 "*Beszélő* évek – 1959"

had been a victim of Stalinism, it was claimed, because he had been arrested and sentenced in a show trial.[64] The Kádár regime also applied this double-strategy to the question of war criminals by blaming Rákosi for having failed to punish them. In 1959, the Supreme Military Prosecutor announced in a "top secret" report that a series of proceedings would be initiated against former gendarmerie detectives, emphasizing that the "punishment policy and results of the years after the Liberation had been incorrect because numerous gendarmes and detectives who had committed serious war crimes had remained undetected and unpunished."[65] The Military Prosecutor also complained that some of the sentences issued by the People's Courts had been revised and often mitigated.

Ervin Hollós, who had worked in the unit in the Ministry of the Interior responsible for the fight against the "inner reaction," wrote that under Rákosi many "counterrevolutionaries, terrorists, and members of the suppressive Horthy organs with blood on their hands lived in Hungary and had managed to avoid being held responsible. … It was Rákosi's immeasurable crime that he not only threw many excellent fighters of the labor movement into prison but also allowed a large segment of the bloody gendarmerie detectives to live free and undisturbed."[66]

By combining the anti-Stalinist with the anti-Fascist narratives, Kádár managed to create the idea that the judicial campaign against real and alleged "Fascists" and "war criminals" which accompanied the suppression of the revolution was in reality a major effort to deal finally with the problem of Hungary's Fascist past and its representatives, who had haunted the innocent Hungarian people from 1919 to 1956. Another target of Communist propaganda after 1956—and not only in Hungary—was West Germany, which was attacked by East Germany and other Eastern Bloc countries as a place where former Nazis had made careers and were even dominating the institutions of the Federal Republic.[67] In the 1960s, this new double-strategy of the Kádár regime would allow it to modify the politics of remembering the events of 1942.

The 1956 revolution also put Tito in a difficult position.[68] After Stalin's death in 1953, both the Soviets and the Yugoslav leaders were keen to come to a rapprochement. In this situation, Hungary played a key role, because Rákosi had

64 Gough, 55.

65 "*Beszélő* évek – 1959."

66 Quoted in: Ibid.

67 Bohus, "Reaction to the Eichmann trial," 745–47.

68 For the following, see: Ripp, "Hungary's Party,"; Granville, "The Soviet-Yugoslav Detente."

been at the forefront of the anti-Titoist campaign. Rákosi's return to the head of the Hungarian Communist party in 1955 was therefore seen as a major obstacle for Yugoslav–Soviet reconciliation. Tito also demanded the full rehabilitation of László Rajk (since he had been accused of being the head of a "Titoist" conspiracy), improvements in the conditions of the South Slavic minorities in Hungary, and reparations. Since his first term as Prime Minister, Imre Nagy had had the support of Belgrade because the Yugoslav Communists hoped that a reform of the Stalinist system would lead to a socialist dictatorship not unlike the one Tito was trying to establish.

On the other hand, the Yugoslav leadership was also wary of a weakening of communism and a return of Hungarian nationalism and revisionism. Nikita Khrushchev even tried to spread rumors about the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. Additionally, Tito must have feared a spread of revolutionary ideas in October 1956. Tito had sympathies for Nagy, but the Yugoslav leadership was shocked by the collapse of communism and feared a restoration of the Horthy regime if the revolution were to get completely out of control.[69] This was the main reason why Tito regarded military intervention as "essential," as he stated in a meeting with Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov on the island of Brioni on November 2, 1956, just two days before the Soviet invasion.[70] Later, Tito and Kádár would clash because of the execution of Nagy in 1958, a step that put the Yugoslav leader in a bad light because he had tried to protect Nagy. Both sides, and also the Soviets, had no interest in an intensification of the conflict. This explains why the mutual accusations of being "Fascist" from the Stalinist period did not surface again. Instead, the language in which both camps criticized each other was becoming remarkably moderate.[71] In the United Nations, where the Hungarian government was chastised for the persecution of the opposition, the Yugoslavs defended Budapest.[72]

During the dramatic days in the fall of 1956, the Hungarian-language press in Yugoslavia reported from Hungary with a certain distance, highlighting the chaos and disruption of everyday life and emphasizing that the refugees from the conflict were treated well in Yugoslavia.[73] During these moments of upheaval

69 Ripp, "Hungary's Party," 202.

70 Ibid., 203.

71 Ibid., 221.

72 Kastner, *Ungarn 1956 vor der UNO*.

73 See, for example: *Magyar Szó* in January 1957 had a few reports about the damage fighting between Hungarian resistance fighters and Soviet troops had done in Budapest. Another series of articles was dedicated to the refugees crossing the border into Yugoslavia.

and uncertainty, the fraught memory of World War II was mostly absent from public discourse in Yugoslavia.

After Eichmann: New Trends in the Commemoration of the Massacre of 1942 in Hungary and Yugoslavia during the 1960s

There were at least two international events which contributed to a change in the way communists and Hungarian society discussed the 1942 incidents after 1961. The first was the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem, which revived the debate about the Holocaust, which had been essentially abandoned at the end of the 1940s. As Kata Bohus notes, this debate was revived against and in spite of Kádár's intentions.[74] Another event, which was not directly related to the topic of World War II and Holocaust remembrance, was the breakup of Hungarian international isolation at the end of 1962, when the United Nations decided to take 1956 off of the agenda.[75]

Even before the Eichmann-trial, in 1959, the Hungarian Communist Party had adopted a new concept that rejected Hungarian "bourgeois nationalism" and nationalist tendencies which had, according to some historians, influenced some of the Stalinist narratives of history based on the idea of a 400 year-long "national liberation struggle."[76] Hungarian historians now could, for the first time since 1949, smell Western air and read Western books.[77] In this context, a few authors began to reevaluate World War II and the murder of the Hungarian Jews in 1944. Looking back, György Száraz wrote that he began to be involved in the process that "could be called historical self-examination or, preferably, taking possession of the whole of our history. It began in earnest in the early 1960s—in close connection with the broadening of the mass basis of the regime."[78] In 1963, János Buzásy, a young archivist who had just finished his studies at ELTE University in Budapest, wrote the first academic monograph on the 1942

74 The international repercussions of the Eichmann trial are studied in an edited volume: Cesarani, *After Eichmann;* Kata Bohus' dissertation studied the Eichmann trial in the context of Kádár's policies: Cf. Bohus, *Jews, Israelites, Zionists,* 77–94. On Hungarian witnesses, see: Golan, "Az Eichmann-per."

75 Kastner, *Ungarn 1956 vor der UNO*.

76 A short mention of the debate can be found in: Pach and Ránki, "A Történettudományi Intézet 25 éve," 466–67.

77 Berendt, *A történelem*, 160.

78 Száraz, "The Jewish Question in Hungary," 27.

massacres.[79] A year later, Tibor Cseres published *Hideg napok* ("Cold Days"), a novel that would make the 1942 raid known again in Hungary and throughout the world.[80] A movie by András Kovács based on Cseres' novel was released in 1966 with the same title. It was a huge national success, with 600,000 viewers in the first three weeks.[81] Outside of Hungary, the film was shown in various cities in Yugoslavia, as well as in Paris, New York, Moscow, and other places, but its biggest success was the Second Prize at the 1st International Film Festival of Karlovy Váry in Czechoslovakia. It also garnered some praise at the Venice Film Festival of 1966. Tibor Cseres and András Kovács, who were engaged in numerous discussions with the public about the film as part of a new effort to study the effects the film had had on "the masses," regarded the film as a "progressive" message.[82] Kovács also claimed that Fascism was not a Hungarian specialty and was not restricted to the past, because Vietnam showed that similar crimes were still happening. Instead, he suggested, the film should be understood as an educational tool which could help overcome the nationalist relics and the "exaggerations" of Stalinism and foster a truly "socialist patriotism."[83] What had mostly changed at this moment was the idea of the "enemy." In the book and film, the Hungarian soldiers who participated in the Novi Sad raid, even those who evinced Fascist leanings, were characterized as complex human beings, not simple "Fascist thugs," as they had been dubbed during the Stalinist period.

Others celebrated Cseres' book as an example of the renewal of Hungarian socialist literature and as an example of Hungarian *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.[84] Georg Lukács contended that the film approached the reality and truth of

79 Buzásy, *Az újvidéki "razzia."* Immediately after the war, the event was mentioned in: Lévai, *Hősök hőse...!,* 12. One of the first historiographical descriptions of the event and the historical context can be found in: Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, 65–79.

80 By 2014, the book had been edited 33 times in Hungarian since the publication of the first edition: Cseres, *Hideg napok*. It has been translated into and published in Serbian (1966), German (East Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1967), Polish (1968), French (1971), and English (Corvina, 2003). These are the results from Worldcat.org, and they are not exhaustive. The writer, Béla Horgas, among others, referred to the Eichmann trial in his review of Cseres' novel: Horgas, "Hideg napok..." With regard to Kovács' film, see: Labov, "Cold Days."

81 The film *Hideg Napok* (1966) also showed the officers and soldiers involved in the massacre as (flawed) human beings, not as primitive Fascist thugs, as films had done during the Stalinist period. Before he made the movie, András Kovács had spent some time in France, studying the *Cinéma Verité*, which had a significant impact on the *Nouvelle Vague*. Cf. Haucke, *Nouvelle Vague in Osteuropa*, 479–82. The numbers of viewers are given in: Kovács, "Egy film drámája," 183.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid., 197, 200.

84 Cf. Horgas, "Hideg napok."

history, presenting a "new, disillusioned national self-image."[85] In her memoirs, Ágnes Heller remembered that, after the movie, "Hungarians for the first time since the end of the war spoke about the Jews as victims. Before it, there had been only Fascists and Communists."[86]

Either way, by the late 1960s the *Cold Days* of 1942 had become a Hungarian *lieu de mémoire*. This had also an effect on Yugoslavia. As point out above, at first the 1956 revolution did not result in a change in the conception of Yugoslav politics of memory. Rather, it made functionaries in Belgrade and in the states and provinces more alert about possible nationalism among different ethnic groups.

Beginning in the second half of the 1960s, as a result of the international trends in Holocaust remembrance and the debates initiated by the book and film "Cold Days" the city of Novi Sad began to publicly commemorate the 1942 massacre.[87] The first official act of commemoration in the town that was not restricted to the Jewish community (as the one in 1952 had been), but rather encompassed the whole local community, was a ceremony on the Danube promenade near the city center in 1967. These commemorations in Novi Sad could also be understood in the wider political context of the deep constitutional crisis of Yugoslavia in the 1960s, which resulted in the weakening of the central government in Belgrade and a strengthening of the political forces on the periphery. Remembrance of the events that had taken place in and around Novi Sad in 1942 was related to the idea of Serbian victimhood in the war.

Conclusion

When the Stalinist system collapsed in Hungary in the aftermath of the revolution, the narrative of the war as a fight of the Hungarian people against its Fascist oppressors, supported by the glorious Soviet army, also faltered. The invading Soviet tanks and the brutal fighting in the streets of Budapest, followed by massive violence against any form of opposition, forced the restored Communist regime to modify its interpretation of World War II. Kádár's attempt to portray his regime as both anti-Fascist and anti-Stalinist allowed reinterpretations after the amnesties of the early 1960s and the tentative opening of the country to

85 Quoted in: Fenyő, "Egy igaz magyar film," 1836–37; see also: "Interjú Lukács Györggyel".

86 Heller, *Affe auf dem Fahrrad*, 285.

87 In 1966, Tibor Cseres' novel was first translated into Serbian by Sava Babić with the title *Hladni dani* (Cold Days) (Subotica: Minerva 1966).

Western ideas. The Hungarian people remained the main victim of the war, but Hungarian soldiers could now also be represented as complex personalities, not only as Fascist thugs. The character of the Horthy regime and a critique of nationalism and of the failure of Rákosi to deal with war criminals were also more openly discussed. The memory of the 1942 massacre in Novi Sad was one of the newly debated events of World War II, and these debates also had an impact on Yugoslavia. There, in the context of the political and constitutional crisis of Yugoslavism, local memory of the massacre, beginning in 1967 (on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the raid), opened a new chapter in the interpretation of the war, while the atrocities committed by partisans at the end of the war remained a taboo until the fall of the regime.

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Rokossowski Coming Home: The Making and Breaking of an (Inter-)national Hero in Stalinist Poland (1949–1956)

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At the beginning was the Great Terror of 1937/38. It meant both the arrest of a Soviet officer of Polish origin, Konstantin Rokossowski, and the destruction of interwar Polish communism.[1] While Rokossowski was freed before the German invasion and survived to serve as a distinguished commander in World War II, Polish communism did not recover from Stalin's onslaught. It had to be reinvented and rebuilt during the war, and it underwent nationalization, Stalinization, and de-Stalinization in the period between 1941 and 1956. This essay uses the tenure of Rokossowski as Polish Minister of Defense between 1949 and 1956 to shed light on the tension between nationalist rhetoric and Sovietization and the ways in which Polish society and popular opinion reacted to these processes.

Keywords: Stalinization, nationalism, internationalism, ethnicities, Polish–Soviet relations, Stalinist Slavism

The Communist Party of Poland (KPP) was a stronghold of internationalism during the interwar years, and it paid dearly for this position, which fed into its unpopularity at home and contributed to the downfall of the the Party in Moscow.[2] The KPP presented the ethnic diversity of interwar Poland; minorities were overrepresented in its ranks. The party's internationalism meant it promoted the establishment of a Polish Soviet Republic as well as a revision of the Western border in favor of Germany. Clearly, these were untenable positions that were not acceptable in Polish society. Polish–Soviet relations had been hostile from the beginning, and neither side had forgotten the war fought in 1920. Still, the 1930s saw a further deterioration of relations. Being associated with anything Polish, even Polish communism, could well be a death sentence in Stalin's Russia. In 1938, the Comintern officially dissolved what was left of the Polish Communist Party. To the USSR, Poland had become an enemy nation in a much broader sense. Beginning in 1937, Soviet citizens with Polish ties or

1 On the life of Konstantin Rokossowski, see his popular biography: Sokolov, *Rokossovskii*. On his political standing in Communist Poland, see Noskova, "K. K. Rokossovskii v Pol'she," 79ff. Since this essay focuses on his time in Poland I use the Polish spelling of his name.

2 Shore, *Caviar and Ashes;* Simocini, *The Communist Party of Poland*; Schatz, *Generation.*

of Polish ethnicity were victims of "mass operations."[3] After the annexation of Eastern Poland, the *kresy*, in 1939, excessive anti-Polish policies continued; thousands of ethnic Poles and other people from the region were deported to Central Asia and Siberia.[4] The Polish elites were the main targets of these repressive measures; the massacre of Katyń stands out as the apogee of these violent policies. Surprisingly, in the midst of this terror, Comintern chieftain Georgi Dimitrov reflected on the revival of Polish communism.

In May 1941, Stalin and Dimitrov proposed the reestablishment of a Polish party. After the German invasion, this matter gained additional urgency. In August 1941, Moscow determined the format of the new organization. It would be called a "worker's party," and its program would be similar to the programs of European labor parties.[5] The new party was to abstain from internationalist rhetoric, hold a distance from the USSR, and avoid Marxist ideology. Still, the events of recent years and the traditional hostility between Poles and Russians would weigh heavy on any relaunch of Polish communism. However, with the support of Dimitrov's apparatus and of a few committed Polish exiles who had survived the terror, the new party was founded. In accordance with Stalin's ideas it was named *Polska Partia Robotnicza* (PPR). One of its Polish founders, veteran communist Alfred Lampe, expressed his doubts about the new mission. He understood that anti-Soviet consensus was the foundation of Polish politics, and he found it hard to imagine a Poland that was not anti-Soviet. The Polish *raison d'état* would have to change. He warned against violent Sovietization: "The way that Russia went in 1917 is not the way Poland should go in 1943."[6]

The founding document of the PPR appealed to the national sentiments of the Polish population.[7] It called for the establishment of a "national front" against the German occupation and advocated an alliance with the Soviet Union. Yet the PPR was officially in favor of Polish sovereignty; an expansion of the USSR was no longer advocated. Rather, the promise was made that a new Poland would be established with new borders, a nation-state that would be closely allied with the USSR. Thus, Stalin and Dimitrov created a new type of communist statehood: not a universal communist federation like the USSR that

3 Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 813–61.

4 Gross and Grudzińska-Gross, *"W czterdziestym nas matko na Sybir zesłali..."*

5 Banac, "27 August 1941," 191–92.

6 "Notatki Alfreda Lampego [August 1943]," in *Archivum Ruchu Robotniczego,* 33. On the founding of the PPR, see: Gontarczyk*, Polska Partia Robotnicza.*

7 "Do Robotników," in *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 51–55. For an analysis of Communist nationalism in Poland, see: Zaremba, *Komunizm.*

could potentially serve as the nucleus of a global communist order, but rather a communist nation-state, founded on and bound by ethnicity, not ideology.

Nation-State Building and Stalinist Slavism

The communist nation-state under Soviet patronage was founded in Lublin in July 1944. The Lublin manifesto reflected both the nationalism and the limited internationalism of the times: it combined the PPR's national front rhetoric with the pan-Slavism that had been characteristic of the Soviet war effort.[8] The history of the Warsaw Uprising, which began shortly after the proclamation of Lublin in order to prevent Sovietization, deepened the divide in Polish society: clearly the sacrifice of members of the AK (*Armia Krajowa* – Home Army) and Stalin's unwillingness to support their struggle marked yet another point of contention.

The establishment of communist rule in Poland was violent and repressive.[9] In contrast to neighboring Czechoslovakia and Tito's Yugoslavia, there were neither pan-Slavic nor Russophile traditions on which the communist party could build.[10] While the opposition and the remnants of the Polish Underground State were being suppressed with the help of the Soviet security apparatus, the PPR began to establish its propaganda machine.[11] From 1944 to 1947, the party made an effort to convince primarily the Polish elites, the *inteligencja*, of the importance of an alliance with the USSR. Slavic committees and a society for friendship with the USSR were established in 1944 to spread the Slavic message.[12] Stalin's persona soon became a prominent figure in postwar Poland; the nation's gratitude to him for the liberation of the country was emphasized.[13] All of this took place within the discursive frame of a pan-Slavism that allowed for a limited internationalism from Warsaw to Prague and Belgrade, dominated by Moscow. Initially, the postwar Soviet empire rested on the foundation of shared enmity with Germany, gratitude to the Red Army for the liberation of Central Europe,

8 "Manifest Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego," in *Wizja programowa Polski Ludowej*. On Stalin's pan-Slavism, see Behrends, "Stalin's slavischer Volkskrieg," 79–108.

9 See e.g. Sowa, *Historia polityczna Polski,* 17–192; Kersten, *Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland*; Kaluza, *Der polnische Parteistaat*.

10 For a comparative perspective, see Behrends, "Stalinist *volonté générale*," 37–73.

11 Stalin himself was regularly informed of the state of affairs in Poland. Cf. Cariewskaja, *Teczka Specjalna J. W. Stalina.*

12 On the Polish–Soviet Friendship Society (TPPR), see: Behrends, "Agitation, Organisation, Mobilisation." See also Chłopek, *"Zdumiewający świat."*

13 See Kupiecki, "Natchnenie milionów."

and the promise of national sovereignty within the Soviet sphere of influence. The tension between nation and empire, between sovereignty and dependence, soon came to haunt Stalin's postwar order.[14] By embracing nationalist rhetoric and bringing local traditions back into the picture, Moscow thought it could combine Lenin-style control with Wilsonian rhetoric of self-determination. In the long run, this proved to be one of the fault-lines of the Yalta order.

In 1945, the party leadership understood the limits of its legitimacy. During a Central Committee plenum in April, the functionaries came to a mixed assessment of their strategy. Jakub Berman, the *éminence grise*, called the propaganda "weak."[15] In May 1945, Władysław Gomułka, the PPR's general secretary, complained that the Polish people were not ready for the limited Slavic internationalism represented by the regime: "Many see in Russia just a continuation of the old Russia—and the legacy of the old Russia, war, centuries of repression undermine the psychology of the nation. The restructuring of these attitudes will take a long time." Gomułka's main point was the failure of the PPR to convince the populace of its national credentials. The PPR was still seen as a foreign agent, something its leader desperately tried to change: "The masses should see us as a Polish Party, they should attack us as Polish communists, not as an agent [of the USSR]."[16] Gomułka almost certainly expressed the mood of broad segments of the population. His view corresponded with a popular joke of the times that offered an alternative reading of the acronym PPR: *Płatne Pachołki Rosji* – "paid servants of Russia." The regime found it hard to gain legitimacy; even after the war was over, a sense of uncertainty remained.[17] During these years, many continued to believe that the nationalist propaganda was merely a cover for the "internationalist" solution to come: the incorporation of Poland into the USSR as its "17th republic." Both underground publications and reports in the party-state archive point in this direction.[18]

Clearly, Moscow's idea of combining nationalism and communism had its limits. It could not—even if this was Moscow's intention—break the chains of popular memory. The history of Polish–Russian relations, the history of communism after 1917, and the events of the Katyń massacre constantly

14 For an elaboration of this argument, see Behrends, "Nation and Empire," 443–66.

15 "Protokół posiedzenia KC PPR z dnia 27 kwietnia 1945 r.," in *Protokoły posiedzeń sekretariatu KC PPR 1945–1946*, 22.

16 Kochański, *Protokół obrad KC PPR,* 13–14.

17 See for an analysis of demoralized postwar Polish society, Zaremba, *Wielka Trwoga*.

18 See e.g. Chudzik, Marczak, and Olkuśnik, *Biuletyny Informacyjne*; see also the collection: Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw. Konspiracyjne druki ulotne.

undermined the official narrative. In Poznań in 1945, people could choose on the first anniversary of the regime whether they wanted to attend the official celebration or an open air mass with Cardinal Hlond, the Primate of Poland. While 3,000 people attended the official celebration, some 30,000 joined Hlond in prayer.[19] Almost a year later, on May 3 1946 in Krakow, the regime's supremacy in the public space was tested again. The city's population, including many university students, intended to celebrate the anniversary of the Polish constitution of 1791, a date of long-standing national significance and a public holiday with an anti-Russian flavor. The regime, on the other hand, tried to establish May 1 as a new Soviet-style celebration throughout Poland. This competition led to a confrontation in Krakow after the regime banned the public celebration of constitution day. Police clashed with demonstrators and cleared the public arena by force.[20] Traditional Polish nationalism was no longer tolerated, and instead of May 3, May 1 was introduced as an obligatory holiday.[21] The regime was willing to fight for cultural supremacy on the streets.

Accelerated Sovietization: 1947

The onset of the Cold War and the firm hold on power of the party ended the more pragmatic approach that the regime had taken since 1944. It gave way to the utopian vision of a fully Sovietized Poland.[22] As had been the case in Stalinist Russia, the Polish regime now tried to mobilize the entire body politic. The official culture was supposed to penetrate all layers of society.

An early example of the regime's new offensive was the first national convention of the Polish–Soviet Friendship Society (TPPR), held on June 1–3, 1946 in Warsaw. Here, the official new blend of nationalism and internationalism was presented to the Polish public. 2,500 delegates from all over the country assembled in the capital to present the official doctrine of "friendship with the Soviet Union." Henryk Świątkowski, the TPPR chairman, underlined that friendship with the USSR was not limited to Polish communists. Rather, it was the task and the desire of the entire nation. Friendship with Moscow was more than a mere slogan. It had to become a "movement" that united the entire Polish

19 "Pismo generala-majora Michaiła Burcewa," in *Polska-ZSRR*, 136–38.

20 Mazowiecki, *Pierwsze starcie*.

21 On 1 May, see Sowiński, *Komunistyczne święto*.

22 Behrends, *Die erfundene Freundschaft*, 131–34.

public behind this cause.[23] Józef Cyrankiewicz, minister and PPS politician, declared friendship with the USSR to be part of Poland's *raison d'état*. Clearly, this new urgency was partially due to the Cold War, which left its mark on internal Polish politics. The party-state needed to show its readiness to act and its firm ties to the Soviet camp.. But there is another way of looking at the changing face of repressive politics in postwar Poland. The mobilization campaigns that started in 1947 can also be interpreted as a sign of strength of the party-state. With the armed insurgency put down, the new borders more or less under control, and the legal opposition beheaded, the Polish regime could use its resources for an extensive propaganda campaign. In May 1947, the Central Committee decided to give the friendship propaganda even higher priority.[24] This decision, however, was not implemented until October. As a consequence, every party member was supposed to become an agitator for friendship with the USSR.[25] Even remote parts of Poland and hostile segments of the populace were now to be reached. Essentially, national mobilization for the internationalist cause was supposed to be unlimited. The next goal of the propaganda apparatus was the celebration of the October Revolution. The festivities were not merely political education. An internal document states that one of the purposes of the events was to deepen "the feeling of cordial friendship with the USSR and the understanding of Soviet cultural achievements, and [make clear] the lasting and decisive importance of the USSR for a sovereign life."[26] The Stalinist state aimed to establish strong emotional bonds with its eastern neighbor. Czesław Miłosz would write in 1951 that there was a certain point when the propaganda for Russia turned into worship of the Soviet Union.[27] 1947 was the point when a more pragmatic mode of Sovietization was abandoned for a more radical version with utopian undertones.

The first highlight of the Stalinist radicalization was the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution in the autumn of 1947. The

23 "Kongres Tow. Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej," *Przyjaźń* 1946, no. 5, 1; "Serdecznie witamy Kongres Towarzystwa Przyjaźni Polsko-Radziekiej – wielka manifestacja przyjaźni," *Wolność*, June 1st, 1946.

24 Sprawozdanie Wydziału Propagandy i Prasy za m-c maj 1947 r., Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), KC PPR, 295/ X-3, 35–42.

25 Uchwała Sekretariatu KC PPR w sprawie propagandy Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej i działalności Towarzystwa Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej, [October 1947], Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie (APK), KW PPR, 113–14. "Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej rozgałęzioną organizacją masową," *Wolność*, October 23, 1947.

26 Instrukcja Nr. 48 w sprawie akcji przygotowawczej do 30 rocznicy Rewolucji Październikowej, September 15, 1947, APK, KW PPR, Nr. 208, 46.

27 Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*.

campaign strove to mobilize all of Polish society: on the anniversary of the revolution, there were to be lectures in all Polish cities and towns, down to the level of villages.[28] The festivities were intended to teach Poles that the October revolution—not independence—had freed them from "hundreds of years of slavery."[29] At the end of 1947, TPPR chairman Henryk Światkowski emphasized his belief that most of the reeducation had already been accomplished.[30] He expected that the remnants of distrust that dated back to the era of Czarism would be overcome in 1948. In the period of High Stalinism, the functionaries of the party-state were supposed to express their unlimited trust in their own propaganda. Światkowski serves as a good example; he set the utopian goal of turning the Polish population into a community of supporters of the USSR within before the end of the following year.

In 1948, the new Stalinist course targeted not only the population. PPR secretary Władysław Gomułka, who had spoken in favor of a "Polish road to socialism," (which at the time was the official line of all parties), was purged in 1948. He was condemned for allegedly having shown "mistrust towards the USSR."[31] From then on, state and party needed to be represented by leaders who stood for the great friendship between the two states. Mieczysław Moczar expressed the new credo for all party members: "The Soviet Union is not only our ally, that is a slogan for the people. For us, comrades, the Soviet Union is our fatherland [nasza Ojczyzna], and I cannot define its borders, today they might be behind Berlin, tomorrow already at Gibraltar."[32] The Soviets, however, remained skeptical of the Polish efforts. The Sovinformburo criticized the Polish party for its tolerance of "nationalism" in the population. They felt that propaganda for the USSR should be intensified.[33] In August 1949, the Kominform demanded a concerted effort in Poland against Anglo-American propaganda.[34]

28 Instrukcja Nr. 48 w sprawie akcji przygotowawczej do 30 rocznicy Rewolucji Październikowej, September 15, 1947, APK, KW PPR, Nr. 208, 46–49.

29 Świątkowski, "Cel i zadania miesiąca wymiany kulturalnej," 3.

30 *Podstawy działalności Towarzystwa Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej. Materiały i wytyczne dla działaczy i kół terenowych*, Warsaw, not dated [1947], 3–10.

31 "W sprawie odchylenia prawicowego i nacjanalistycznego w kierownictwe partii," in *Protokoły posiedzeń Biura Politycznego KC PPR,* 245–53. On the purge of 1948 see also Spałek, *Komuniści przeciw komunistom.*

32 "Oświadczenie Mieczysława Moczara skierowane do Biura Politycznego KC PPR," in *Posiedzenie Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Partii Robotniczej,* 398. On Mieczysław Moczar cf.: Lesiakowski, *Mieczysław Moczar.*

33 "Informacja Władysława Sokołowskiego," in *Polska-ZSRR*, 241–50.

34 "Pis'mo sotrudnika kantseliarii sekretariata Informbiuro V. I. Ovcharova," 161–62.

Rokossowski's Homecoming: The November Campaign of 1949

According to Boris Sokolov , Joseph Stalin chose to make Soviet Marshal Konstantin Rokossowski Polish Defense Minister in order to have trusted eyes and ears in Warsaw. Stalin invited Rokossowski, who had served as commander of Soviet Army group North in Poland since 1945, to his dacha and made him an offer he could not refuse.[35] The decision was delivered to Warsaw on October 27.[36] The conflict with Tito had reminded Stalin how fragile his power abroad could be. The appointment could be read as a sign of Stalin's distrust towards the Polish party and its leadership, of course. But there were certainly more aspects to the decision: Moscow clearly craved control of the Polish Army. It wanted to ensure that the second largest army in the empire would be modernized, loyal, and battle-ready if the Cold War turned hot. The scenario in Asia, with the military victory of the Chinese communists and the Korean War, suggested that military conflict might flare up again in Europe. Rokossowski could exercise control over the Armed Forces and report to Stalin on the party. And through his public position, Rokossowski would serve as a constant reminder of the limited sovereignty of communist nation-states. The army, traditionally viewed as the core of independent Polish statehood, was put firmly under Soviet control. Yet, publicly, a different story was told: the tale of the Marshal's homecoming.

Even before being appointed Minister of Defense, the Soviet Marshal was a well-known figure in the communist-controlled People's Republic of Poland. He had liberated the northern part of the country during World War II, and he had remained in Poland to command Red Army troops who remained stationed in Silesia. As Supreme Soviet Commander in Poland, he had been turned into one of the symbols of Polish–Soviet friendship. Loyalty to the USSR manifested itself in carefully stage-managed gestures of the population towards him. During the winter of 1949, several Polish towns made him an honorary citizen.[37] Polish delegations visited him to show their gratitude for the liberation.[38] During the autumn of 1949, Stalinist Poland once again was dominated by the annual

35 Sokolov, *Rokossovskii*, 470–71.

36 Noskova, "Rokossovskij v Pol'she." According to Sokolov and Noskova, Rokoswski remained a political outsider in Poland. His main accomplishments were of military nature.

37 "Marszałek K. Rokossowski honorowym obywatelem m. Szczecina," *Wolność*, February 27, 1949; "Marszałek K. Rokossowski honorowym obywateiographielem Gdyni i Gdańska. Uroczysta akademia w czartą rocznicę wyzwolenia Wybrzeża," *Wolność*, April 4, 1949.

38 See e.g. "Robotnicy śląscy u Marszałka Rokossowskiego," *Przyjaźń* 8 (1947): 24; "Pomorzanie u marszałka K. Rokossowskiego," *Wolność*, May 9, 1949; "Z całego serca... Delgacja Gliwic w gościnie u

friendship campaign, the "month of Polish–Soviet friendship." The population was encouraged to familiarize itself with and embrace Soviet culture. Literature, the arts, film, and political education *sensu strictu* played an important role during these weeks. It was to be a special year because the campaign would last even longer than it had in previous years: after the month of friendship, which officially ended on November 7, the celebrations of Stalin's 70th birthday would begin.[39] Thus, the autumn of 1949 would be one of constant mobilization around the USSR and its leader. Rokossowski's appointment as Minister of Defense and Marshal of Poland was announced on the final day of the friendship campaign, right before the anniversary of the October Revolution.[40] This was no coincidence. The scheduled date in the regime's calendar signified the importance of the event. Furthermore, the news could be spread in the controlled setting of the October celebrations. The propaganda and the security apparatus would be on the alert, and this would reduce the risk of spontaneous protests or rioting. The official appointment was not made until November, giving the party-state a few weeks to prepare the event. The campaign around Rokossowski focused on reinventing his public persona and his vita and welcoming him home as a Polish Patriot. On the day of his inauguration into office three short biographies were distributed: one was issued by the state publishing house, one by the youth organization and one by the Ministry of Defense. The party's publishing house *Ksiazka i Wiedza* even polonized his name on the cover: in accordance with Polish orthography they spelled his name Rokosowski instead of Rokossowski.[41]

All three officially released biographies constructed a contrast between his vita and the fate of the Polish nation. Rokossowski could be a communist patriot because he had not played any role in the ill-fated interwar Polish republic. Instead, he had chosen the Soviet side in 1917, defended Soviet power during the Civil War in Russia, and risen in the ranks of the Red Army. According to this leitmotif, he had had to abandon his nation because it had chosen the wrong path. A nation that had erred had lost its son, who had only been able to come

marszałka K. Rokossowskiego," *Wolność*, May 22, 1949; "Delegacja mas pracujących Wrocławia u marszałka K. Rokossowskiego," *Wolność*, July 30, 1949.

39 The Stalin-cult had been introduced in 1944, but it gained more prominence in 1947, when cultic veneration of the Soviet leader became obligatory at official events. Cf. Behrends, "Exporting the Leader," 161–78.

40 "Konstanty Rokossowski Marszałkiem Polski, Ministrem Obrony Narodowej R.P.," *Przegląd Wydarzeń* 14 (1949).

41 Cf. Żołnierz wolności ludu wolności Polski; *Marszałek Rokossowski*; *Konstanty Rokossowski*. See also "Życiorys Marszałka Rokosowskiego," *Przygląd Wydarzeń* 14 (1949).

home because the nation had returned to the right path of history. It was now the lost son's duty to guide his country further along the right track. According to the official narrative, it was beneficial to have chosen the Soviet side as early as possible; it was also important to emphasize this because so many Poles had suffered under Soviet rule.

According to the official narrative, Rokossowski was born in Warsaw, the son of a railway worker.[42] As a youth in Warsaw, he had become part of the Polish workers' movement. During World War I, he was drafted into the Imperial Army, and he left his homeland during the retreat to the east. In Russia, he sided with the revolution, defending it in the civil war and, through determination and hard work, rising to the position of general. Rokossowski's exemplary heroism during World War I resulted from his closeness to both Stalin and common soldiers on the frontline. Furthermore, he had decisively intervened in the battles of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk. His participation in the liberation of Poland was emphasized, as was his urge to help the uprising in Warsaw, which was sabotaged by the leadership of the Armia Krajowa. His vita was constructed along similar lines in all three biographies.

The texts were also garnished with anecdotes which were supposed to convey his Polishness. Poles meet him during the war and they are drawn to him because they recognize him as a compatriot, even before he speaks and despite his Soviet uniform. One story has Rokossowski correct a translator, which prompts a Polish lady to shout: "How well he speaks our tongue [jak fajnie po naszemu gada]," while another one claims: "I am sure, yes, he is a Pole, one of our workers from Warsaw."[43] The inhabitants of eastern Poland were said to be proud that a Pole had led the armies that liberated them. On the way to Berlin, the friendship between the Polish people and their lost son strengthened. Because of his heroic deeds, the biographers insisted, Marshall Rokossowski represented the best traditions of Polish freedom fighters. He was portrayed as continuing the national struggle that had started centuries ago. He was the embodiment of the "most sacred traditions of the Polish struggle for freedom," fought under the battle-cry "for our freedom and yours [za naszą i waszą wolność]." The Polish nation saw in him "the proud traditions

42 The birthplace of Rokossowski is to this day the subject of dispute. In official documents he sometimes gave Warsaw, sometimes the Russian Velikie Luki near Pskov. See Sokolov, *Rokossovskii*.

43 *Marszałek Rokossowski na czele Wojska Polskiego*, 29.

of Tadeusz Kościuszkos, Henryk Dąbrowskis [...] Karol Świerczewski-Walter, and many other great Poles [...]."[44]

The biographies demanded a warm welcome for Rokossowski by the Polish public: "With pride, joy and trust, the Polish nation gives the leadership of the armed forces of our country into the hands of Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski, the great Pole, the glowing patriot and revolutionary, the faithful son of Warsaw's working class, the servant and citizen of People's Poland."[45] The Central Committee issued an instruction to agitators that informed them of the official line: The Polish nation and the working class were urged to welcome the appointment as a strengthening of Poland's security and its borders.[46] It was argued that Rokossowski would work to strengthen Polish sovereignty because he would ensure an even tougher defense against "German chauvinists." It was the task of the agitators in the field to counter the smear campaign against Rokossowski advanced by *Voice of America* and radio stations in London, Madrid, Hamburg, and Belgrade. Rokossowski was a national leader carrying "the Polish eagle on his hat […] to the great joy of the Polish soldiers, who are proud of such a leader." Rokossowski would make the "peace camp" even stronger, "from Peking to Berlin."[47] Thus, the national was intertwined with the international dimension of the event: the stronger defense of Communist Poland meant the strengthening of the whole Eurasian Soviet Empire.

In addition to the party and the TPPR, other mass-organizations were involved in the campaign. *Związek Młodzieży Polskiej* (ZMP), the party-state's youth organization, told its members to attend local meetings, where Rokossowski's biography would be studied. The result of these meetings was supposed to be a discussion which would lead to telegrams from all parts of the country in support of the Marshal.[48] These instructions show how carefully the party-state intended to build up support for Rokossowski. The stage-management of public approval was part of the larger mobilization campaign to celebrate the October

44 "*Konstanty Rokossowski – Marszałek Polski*," 29–30; cf. also "Życiorys Marszałka Rokosowskiego," 23 and "Marszałek Rokossowski na czele Wojska Polskiego – to wzrost naszych sił obronnych – wzmocnienie bezpieczeństwa Polski," *Przegląd Wydarzeń* 15 (1949): 15.

45 "Marszałek Rokossowski na czele Wojska Polskiego," 19–20. See also the official reporting in *Trybuna Ludu*, November 13, 1949.

46 "Naród Polski wita Marszałka Rokosowskiego," *Przegląd Wydarzeń* 14 (1949).

47 "Marszałek Rokossowski na czele Wojska Polskiego – to wzrost naszych sił obronnych," 16–17, 22, 24.

48 Do Przewodniczącego Zarządu Wojewódzkiego ZMP, November 8, 1949, AAN, ZMP, 451/ V-93, 72–73. On the ZMP cf. Kochanowicz, *ZMP w terenie*.

anniversary. It was part of an effort to form opinion, contain resistance and expressions of disapproval, and exhibit public enthusiasm.

Nationalism and Internationalism: Some Excerpts from Official Reports

The population in communist Poland was faced with a *fait accompli*. Moscow had decided to impose its will, and the Polish party-state used the means at its disposal to ensure popular support for the decision. It is, of course, tempting to try to look behind the façade of the stage-managed public sphere.[49] Clearly, the great shows of harmony and enthusiasm which have been so carefully orchestrated and controlled by modern dictatorships convey little about the mood of their populations.[50] Similarly, the mass-media offers little useful information in this regard. They were more part of the show than a reliable source.[51] The sources that historians are left with are either ego-documents, such as letters and diaries in which individuals recorded their thoughts and the views of other citizens, or the internal reports from various sources of the party-state. Clearly, each of these two kinds of sources is problematic in many ways. Neither can be used as a substitute for modern opinion polling, which was introduced in the twentieth century in liberal democracies.

The internal reports of the communist party-state constitute a specific genre. The people who wrote them (whether party members, functionaries of the security apparatus, or members of the mass-organizations) were not free to express their opinions. On the contrary, conventionally, reports alleged overwhelming support for the policies of the party-state. Like the mass-media, internal reports praised the leadership for its wise decisions. Still, internal reports would usually also refer to problems that had arisen, "misunderstandings," and rumors or the activities of enemies of the people.[52] Usually, they would highlight that the critics held a minority position, and the reports portrayed critics as backwards or alien to society. The language of the reports is as stereotypical as that used in the media. Even internally, discursive rules applied. Despite these limitations, internal reports can be a useful source that furthers an understanding

49 See e.g. Corner, *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes*; Merl, *Politische Kommunikation in der DDR*.

50 Still, we should not underestimate their influence at home and abroad and the role they played for the (self)representation of the elites. Cf. e.g. Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches*; Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics*; Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*; Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!*; Rolf, *Soviet Mass Festivals*.

51 Behrends, "Repräsentation und Mobilisierung."

52 For a collection of rumors from Stalinist Poland, see: Jarosz and Pasztor, *W krzywym zwierciadle*.

of popular reactions in certain situations. While we should not read them as scientific surveys of the public mood, we can use them to extract certain (more or less random) sound bites from society. This allows us to venture hypotheses concerning which parts of the propaganda narrative were picked up, criticized, or ridiculed, both in private and in such public spaces, such as the streets, the workplace, or public transportation.

The Poles were not the only people monitoring the situation in the autumn of 1949. Soviet agencies observed the mood of the populace carefully. They noted that the appointment of Rokossowski as Minister of Defense revived fears among many Poles that they would be annexed and incorporated into the USSR. These anxieties surfaced in the persistent idea that Poland would become the "17th republic" of the USSR.[53] This subject was also raised in a report of the Cominform to the Soviet Central Committee.[54] The report included impressions from across Poland: it claimed that in the voivodship of Poznań many people were afraid that the rise of Rokossowski would mark the beginning of renewed mass deportations to Siberia. Obviously, the repressions of 1939/40 were still remembered. Two students in Lublin spread the rumor that Rokossowski had been deployed to quell a "mutiny" [bunt] in the Polish Army. People in the town in eastern Poland were certain that in a short time "all power" in Poland would belong "to the Soviets." Even party members saw the appointment as the complete and final loss of sovereignty. A communist from Warsaw noted: "The goal behind the appointment of Rokossowski is the Russification and Bolshevization of the Polish Armed Forces." According to the report, such fears were also widespread in other state institutions. Postal workers were speculating that their offices would soon be placed under Soviet control. Other citizens interpreted Rokossowski's rise as preparation for war. Many feared that the outbreak of hostilities was imminent. Despite these findings, the author lauded the PZPR for its effective propaganda, and he or she characteristically concluded that the majority of the Polish working class supported Rokossowski's new role.

The reports in the Polish archives also indicate that Rokossowski's appointment came as a shock for many. Although these reports also stereotypically attest that Rokossowski enjoyed great support among the population, much of their content hints at people's anger, fear, and confusion. People instantly started

53 "Iz dnevnika zaveduiushchego otdelom," in *Sovetskii faktor v Vostochnoi Evrope*, 2: 255–56.

54 The following examples are from: "Ze sprawozdania Wasylija Owczarowa," in *Polska w dokumentach z archiwów rosyjskich,* 65–66. See also for secret police reports from the Polish IPN-archive Kamiński, *Biuletyny dzienne*, 432–40.

to prepare for war and crisis. Throughout Warsaw and the surrounding districts, women were buying basic commodities and foodstuff from local stores. They wanted to be ready in case of war and annexation by the USSR.[55] Other citizens of Warsaw discussed the question of whether the Marshal was a Soviet or a Polish citizen. A resident of Lublin (which before 1918 had been a city in the Russian Empire) interpreted Rokossowski's nomination historically: "Our little father the Czar gave his Prince Konstantin, and Stalin sent us Konstantin Rokossowski" [Car batiuszka dał nam księcia Konstantego, a Stalin przysłał Konstantego Rokossowskiego]. Officers from the interwar era suspected a purge of the Polish Army. From Szczecin, the party reported that the workers had reacted positively to the news, but whether the Marshal was a Pole or a Russian was a topic of discussion. They also believed that Poland would soon become the "17th republic." A Pomeranian worker called the appointment of a foreigner as Minister of Defense a "parody." Another citizen quipped: "There seems to be no post that a Russian cannot hold. I cannot grasp how a foreign citizen can become Marshal of Poland."[56] The narrative about the "son of Warsaw's working class" did not convince everybody.

On November 10, the party reported from Rzeszów that people there had started to buy basic goods to ensure that they would be ready in case of war. Citizens of Krakow were sure that a Soviet ambassador had taken over power in Warsaw. They compared the situation with Western Europe: "France is ruled by the Americans and we are ruled by the USSR."[57] The Polishness of Rokossowski, which was one of the main claims of the party-state, was questioned. A former party member asked: "What kind of Pole spent his whole life in the USSR?" At Warsaw University and the capital's Polytechnic School oppositional graffiti could be found: "Down with the usurper, down with Rokossowski!"[58] A report from Wrocław stated that, while most comrades were in favor of the decision, doubts remained.[59]

A party report from the beginning of December attempted to summarize popular sentiment in Silesia. People there believed "a) Poland will become the

55 Po mianowaniu Marszałka Rokossowskiego Ministrem Obrony Narodowej, Meldunki z terenu Nr. 226, November 7, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, Wyd. Org., 237/ VII-119, 135.

56 Ibid., Nr. 227, November 8, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, Wyd. Org., 237/ VII-119, 138–43, quotations 141, 142.

57 Ibid., Nr. 229, November 10, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, Wyd. Org., 237/ VII-119, 148–51.

58 Ibid., Nr. 230, November 11, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, Wyd. Org., 237/ VII-119, Bl. 152–57, quotes Bl. 153.

59 Ibid., Nr. 232, November 14, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, Wyd. Org., 237/ VII-119, 163–64.

17th republic, b) Poland will be sold."[60] According to the report, the agitators were trying to instill calm. People in the Silesian town of Ratibor were worried that they would be forced to move: "The rumor is spreading that the whole area will be occupied by Soviet forces and the population will have to leave their homes."[61] Finally, the party committee from Opole, Silesia remarked that, "in conjunction with the appointment of Marshal Rokossowski, those opposed to our system and to the alliance with the Soviet Union spread the propaganda according to which the USSR has forced a Marshal upon us whose heritage and biography have [deliberately] been obscured."[62]

The internal party documents and the Soviet reports from Poland show that the official biographies written before the nomination of Rokossowski anticipated when the decisive point would come: given the effects of many years of nationalist propaganda and the attachment of the population to national sentiments dating back to the times of the partition, the notion of sovereignty in Poland was crucial. The appearance of a Soviet Marshal in the Polish government undermined the government's claim of independence from the USSR. In November 1949, the regime tried to master the propaganda battle by claiming that the Marshal was both a Pole and a Soviet internationalist; this position, however, did not convince many skeptics. The internationalist friendship propaganda had always preached Poland's alliance with the USSR as a guarantee of national sovereignty. Segments of the population were inclined to interpret Rokossowski's rise to power as a return to the communist internationalism of the interwar period. Back then, the Polish Communist Party advocated the country's inclusion in the Soviet Union. It seemed plausible that the party could return to the policies of the 1920s. Additionally, Poles had centuries of experience with Russian imperialism. To many Poles, Bolshevik internationalism had seemed like little more than another metamorphosis of the Russian empire.

The Polish Troika and the Downfall of the Soviet Marshal in 1956

From the end of 1949 until his downfall during the "Polish October" of 1956, Marshal Rokossowski held a prominent position in the public culture of Stalinist Poland. After Stalin's 70th birthday in December 1949, the Stalinist leadership

60 Wydział Propagandy, Oświaty i Kultury Katowice. Z sprawozdań KP i KM dotyczące wrogiej działalności, December 2, 1949, AAN, KC PZPR, 237/ VII-343, 23–28, quote 23.

61 Ibid., 26.

62 Ibid., 28.

cult grew to almost Soviet proportions.[63] But in Poland, the cult of the Soviet leader was supplemented with local cults. The propaganda placed the Polish party leader Bierut and Marshal Rokossowski to the right and left of "Poland's unbending friend." This troika came to represent Polish statehood during the years of High Stalinism. On many occasions, pictures of the troika would appear on public buildings or at meetings and conferences.[64] The chant "Stalin-Bierut-Rokossowski" echoed through many conventions of Stalinist Poland. The regime cultivated the Soviet Marshal as a symbol of its power, and he certainly served as a marker of loyalty to the USSR.

The troika represented the hybridity of the Polish state during Stalinism. It was not a Soviet republic, but it was also not a sovereign nation-state. It existed between nationalist rhetoric and Soviet domination.[65] The invented biography of Rokossowski was a Polish version of Stalinist internationalism. It was a narrative designed to ensure Soviet domination. The plausibility of the narrative suffered from the gap between nationalism and internationalism, which could never be bridged. It had to be accepted, because in Stalinist culture such contradictions could not be discussed.

Recent research has shown that the military man Rokossowski was a rather poor politician. He quickly managed to isolate himself within the Polish leadership.[66] His strength lay, rather, in the reorganizing and purging the Polish forces.[67] Apparently, he was one of the initiators of the campaign against communists with Jewish backgrounds in the Politburo. Yet, this did not prevent him from falling from grace together with them in the autumn of 1956. Post-Stalin national communism had no place for the hybridity that he represented between Soviet and Polish identity. When the Stalinist narratives were questioned following Khrushchev's "secret speech," Rokossowski found himself at the center of popular criticism. In the spring of 1956, Poles began to be able to voice

63 Behrends, "Exporting the Leader," 176–97.

64 On the Bierut cult, see: Main, "President of Poland or 'Stalin's Most Faithful Pupil?'," 179–93; Zaremba, "Drugi stopień drabiny."

65 Another Polish–Soviet hybrid constructed by the propaganda state was Feliks Dzierżyński, the founder of the Cheka (Soviet state security organization). On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his death in 1951, he was portrayed as another icon of the Polish–Soviet friendship with a hybrid identity. Cf. Daniszewski, *Feliks Dzierżyński*. In the center of Warsaw, Plac Bankowy was renamed Dzierżyński Square, and a monument to "Iron Felix" was erected. See also: AAN, KC PZPR, 237/ VIII- 183.

66 His lack of knowledge of Polish also played a role. See Noskova, "Rokossovskii v Pol'she" and Sokolov, *Rokossovskii*.

67 See Poksiski, *Represje wobec oficerów Wojska Polskiego*.

their concerns in public.[68] The anti-Soviet mood on Polish streets could clearly be heard. The Marshal was seen as a symbol of Soviet domination over Polish matters. The internationalist campaign of 1949 and the years of promoting the Soviet Marshal in Poland backfired. The end of the Stalin cult also threw into question the role of Rokossowski in Poland. The symbolic death of the leader's persona also left a mark on those associated with him. Political turbulence soon led to political turmoil behind the scenes in the party-state.[69] Rokossowski was clearly associated with the Moscovite ("Natolin") faction in this struggle. Yet, perhaps as important as the internal showdown was the destruction of his image on the Polish streets in 1956.

The party-state tried in vain to limit public discussion to the "secret speech" and certain crimes of Stalin and his entourage. As the year progressed, it became obvious that this attempt to control public discourse was failing. The dynamics of the discussion proved impossible to control, and in the spring and early summer the legitimacy of the entire postwar order in Poland began to crumble. Many former Stalinists in the party and *inteligencja* changed sides and repositioned themselves as reform socialists or national communists.[70] In March 1956, the party organs in the provinces reported "sharp discussions" to Warsaw.[71] Neither the massacre at Katyń nor 1939 was considered a taboo anymore. Workers in Stalinogród, the former Katowice, were demanding the removal of Stalin portraits and declared "Stalin is an enemy of the people."[72] The official discourse was turned against those who had long represented absolute power. In April of 1956, internal discussion of the PZPR and in major enterprises centered on subjects such as the Warsaw uprising of 1944 and the possibility of comparing Stalin and Hitler.[73] Soviet-style mass-organizations, like the communist youth ZMP and the TPPR, began to disintegrate.[74]

68 See Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite*; Behrends, *Die erfundene Freundschaft,* 341–48.

69 Machcewicz, "Der Umbruch 1956 in Polen."

70 Rykowsk and Władyka, *Polska próba*, 131–64.

71 Meldunki z terenu Nr. 21/ 1574, Zapoznanie aktywu partyjnego z referatom tow. Chruczczowa, 28.3.1956, AAN, KC PZPR, 237/VIII-3858, 182–90.

72 Meldunki z terenu Nr. 23/ 1576, Zapoznanie aktywu partyjnego z referatom tow. Chruczczowa, 30.3.1956, AAN, KC PZPR, 237/VIII-3858, 198–207. For similar rhetoric in Wrocław, see Ciesielski, *Wrocław 1956*, 71–73.

73 Meldunki z terenu Nr. 23/ 1576, Organizacja partyjna, 4.4.1956, AAN, KC PZPR, 237/VIII-3859, 1–12.

74 Behrends*, Die erfundene Freundschaft*, 336–37.

In June 1956, Poland was rocked by the violent uprising of workers in the western city of Poznań.[75] Strikes and economic protests had quickly turned national and distinctly anti-Soviet. The local party headquarters was stormed by protesters, and Soviet insignia were destroyed and replaced by Polish symbols. The iconoclasm lasted through the morning and has been described as a "festival of liberation" by Paweł Machcewicz.[76] The prison, the courts, and the local police came under attack, and the party-state began to lose control of the city. Demonstrators began to besiege the local representatives of the secret police as well. Policemen were denounced as "SS" or "Gestapo"; some were convinced they were "Russians in Polish uniforms."[77] From midday onwards, the party-state mobilized the Army in order to crush the insurgency with the use of violence. Clearly, as commander of the Army, Rokossowski bore responsibility for the use of force. The fighting, which lasted until the next morning, claimed more than 90 lives. 10,000 soldiers and several hundred tanks were needed to pacify the city. The escalation of the Poznań uprising shows how deeply unpopular the Soviet symbolism—the imperial discourse of Stalinist internationalism—was in postwar Poland. Poles were willing to risk their lives for the destruction of the symbols of Soviet domination.

The summer of 1956 remained turbulent in Poland. Regime change at the 8th plenum of the Central Committee in October brought Władysław Gomułka to power and marked the beginning of national communism in Poland. His rise was accompanied by mass rallies on the streets of Warsaw and the downfall of Marshall Rokossowski. While the masses chanted traditional patriotic songs and hailed the new general secretary, who profited from his anti-Soviet charisma, they demanded the immediate resignation of the Minister of Defense. The anti-Soviet mood of the public led to a new, unprecedented wave of iconoclasm. Portraits of Rokosswoski were among the symbols of power that were publicly burned. Among the slogans of the demonstrators were "Rokossowski go home," "Rokossowski to the kolkhoz," and "Rokossowski to Siberia."[78] All over the country Soviet symbols and TPPR propaganda were destroyed. The official universe of Polish Stalinism, carefully built between 1947 and 1949, was dismantled within a few days. The nationalist mood persisted through the winter

75 See Makowski, *Poznański czerwiec*; Jankowiak and Rogulski, *Poznański czerwiec*; Białecki, *Poznański czerwiec*; Jankowiak, *Poznański Czerwiec 1956*.

76 Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite,* 87–124.

77 Makowski, *Poznański czerwiec,* 95–123.

78 All examples in Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite,* 158–213.

and led to occasional attacks on Soviet barracks and other remaining symbols of the despised empire. Still, Gomułka decreed in the winter of 1956 that Polish–Soviet friendship was here to stay, but not in the Stalinist version and without its most prominent personification.[79]

Epilogue

The second attempt at national communism in Poland left neither room for Jewish communists in the party leadership nor for Polish–Soviet hybridity. The Polishness of the new leadership had to be beyond any doubt. In 1956, Communist nationalism swept away what was left of the notion of Stalinism's friendship of the people in Poland. Gomułka returned to power riding a wave of national sentiment.

Decades later, during the reign of Leonid Brezhnev, Soviet officers were allowed to publish their memoirs. Given the cult of the "Great Patriotic War," which was initiated by the party-state, these texts were, of course, strictly censored. Konstantin Rokossowski found a way to avoid mention of the ambivalent Polish episode of his life. In his official autobiography he did not raise the subject of the turmoil of postwar Stalinism; rather, he concentrated on his participation in the defeat of Nazi Germany.[80] The Polish marshal with Soviet origins, his meteoric rise in 1949, and his downfall in the turbulent year 1956 were not to be remembered in Brezhnev's USSR. Stalinism and its aftermath in Central Europe had become an embarrassment which should not contaminate the biography of a Soviet hero of the "Great Fatherland War."

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79 Behrends, *Die erfundene Freundschaft,* 347–65.

80 Rokossovskii, *Soldatskii dolg*.

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Phantom Voices from the Past: Memory of the 1956 Revolution and Hungarian Audiences of Radio Free Europe

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Following the short period of consolidation under János Kádár in the immediate aftermath of the 1956 revolution, expressions of the legacy and memory of the uprising were no longer permitted in the public sphere and had to be confined to the private sphere. The activity of émigré actors and institutions, including the broadcasts of Western radio stations, played a crucial role in sustaining the memory and the mentality of the revolution. In 1986, thirty years after the national trauma of 1956, Radio Free Europe broadcasted an array of programs commemorating the revolution, while the official socialist media in Hungary contended again that what had happened in 1956 had been a counterrevolution. This study primarily investigates two questions. Firstly, it casts light on the importance of the RFE's archival machinery, which recorded on magnetic tape the broadcasts of the Hungarian radio stations during the revolution in 1956. Sharing these audio-documents with audiences 30 years later, RFE could replay the revolution, significantly strengthening the interpretation of the events as a revolution. The idiosyncratic voices of the key figures of the revolution guaranteed the authenticity of the commemoration programs even for members of the younger generation among the audiences. Secondly, this study sheds light on the counter-cultural practices through which listeners tried to reconstruct the "body" of the "specters" of the suppressed cultural heritage and eliminate the asymmetry between the radio's accessible voice and its non-accessible physical vehicle.

Keywords: communist historical representation, documentary programs, authenticity, "presence effects," samizdat, radizdat, magnitizdat, counter-cultural practices

"October 23 passed in such utter silence that people did not even dare mention the date,"[1] wrote a listener to Radio Free Europe on the 10th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution. According to this source, all traces of the "experience of togetherness forged by the revolution had been broken by then."[2] This was one of the consequences of the brutally violent policies carried out by János Kádár's new regime, which imposed the Party's official interpretation of counterrevolution on society following intervention by Soviet forces on

1 *Observance on the 10th anniversary*, Item no. 2303/66.; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

2 György, *Néma hagyomány*, 75.

November 4th. Expressions of the suppressed memory and mentality of the 1956 Revolution were no longer possible in the public sphere and had to be confined to the private sphere, creating a kind of "widespread national oblivion."[3] Three decades later, however, expressions of an enduring collective memory of the revolution began to appear, and they came to play an important role in undermining the legitimacy of the one-party state.

While the narrative of the "counterrevolution" served as a means of legitimizing Kádár's regime, any attempt to cultivate the memory of the 1956 Revolution belonged to the history of resistance. This history of political or artistic resistance not only included sporadic domestic manifestations originating from personal memory, but also the activity of the democratic opposition, present as of the late 1970s. The activity of émigré actors and institutions—including broadcasts from Western radio stations and émigré newspapers published abroad, but still resonating in Hungary—should also be taken into account, as they played a crucial role in counterbalancing the predominance of socialist propaganda by presenting an interpretation of the October events as a revolution.[4]

In the West, stations such as Radio Free Europe (RFE) and the BBC regularly commemorated the revolution in Hungarian-language broadcasts transmitted from the far side of the Iron Curtain. "Even as we keep trying to forget the October events, we were pleased to listen to a proper commemoration of this national event,"[5] wrote the previously cited listener to RFE in 1966. Twenty years later, on the 30th anniversary, between July 1 and December 31, 1986 a wide repertoire of commemorative programs was broadcast concerning the background, the events, and the aftermath of the 1956 Revolution.[6]

Naturally, RFE's commemorative programs ran parallel to those aired in the socialist mass media, so listeners had no choice but to question the authenticity of these contradictory sources. In 1986, authenticity was a crucial question, because the audiences for all of these commemorations included not only the generation which witnessed the events, but members of younger generations as well, i.e. people with no personal memories of 1956. This study investigates the struggle over interpretations of 1956's meaning within the framework of the

3 Ibid., 100.

4 Ibid., 77.

5 *Observance on the 10th anniversary*, Item no. 2303/66.; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

6 Borbándi, *Magyarok az Angol Kertben*, 369.

attempts made by the two most important agents, the socialist mass media and RFE, to establish the authenticity of their own commemorations.

By the time of the 30th anniversary of 1956 in 1986, a struggle had begun for Kádár's position as general secretary, and a period of economic stagnation was engendering increased expectations by society at large. In this regard, how the past surrounding 1956 was treated became a kind of "litmus test"[7] for the Party's ability to change and provide effective reforms. The question of whether 1956 could be given a new, official interpretation therefore became a key issue in Hungary.

"History belongs entirely to us": The 30th Anniversary of 1956 in Official Socialist Media

While in the autumn of 1985 it may have seemed that the official interpretation of 1956 had shifted just in time for the 30th anniversary,[8] events actually took another direction. At the 13th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP), János Berecz was appointed Secretary of the Central Committee and Chief of the Agitprop Committee. The neo-dogmatic cultural policies of Berecz, who had been one of the major voices in the counterrevolutionary narrative,[9] left their mark on the commemoration activities surrounding the 30th anniversary.

The aim to represent and again retell what had happened in the dramatic days of late October was motivated by at least two factors. Firstly, Berecz was attempting to gain power by extending Kádár's offer one more time. This offer to Hungarian society was a promise to raise the standards of living in exchange for acceptance of the communist political system. Secondly, the socialist organs were conscious of the increase in activity by émigré organizations and their intensive relationships with Hungary's internal opposition, which was eager to rehabilitate 1956 as a revolution. The Agitprop Committee therefore decided to counterbalance the effects of Western "propaganda" and unveil its alleged falsifications by cementing the official counterrevolutionary narrative. Thus, Hungary's official commemoration of the revolution's 30th anniversary resulted

7 I am grateful to András Mink for this metaphor and for his other critical comments.

8 Révész, *Aczél és korunk*, 359.

9 The third edition of Berecz's book *Ellenforradalom tollal és fegyverrel* [Counterrevolution with pen and weapon] was actually published in 1986.

in propaganda activity that was more dogmatic in approach compared to that experienced five years before.

According to a statement by the Agitprop Committee made in March, 1986, "the propaganda connected to the 30th anniversary [had to] emphasize the unchanged, constant interpretation."[10] On November 4, 1986, at the "great celebration" of both the crushed counterrevolution and the establishment of Kádár's counter-government, Berecz made the following statement in his speech: "Today there is no need to evaluate the events of 1956 and the processes that led to it in any other way than we did then, at the end of 1956."[11]

Berecz was referring to the party resolution issued on December 5, 1956, according to which the October events could only be classified as a total "counterrevolution."[12] The resolution confirmed that the counterrevolutionary forces had consisted of reactionaries—former land-owners, Horthy-fascists, etc.—aiming to crush socialist achievements and restore the partially capitalist, partially feudal system of an earlier era. The resolution stated that even if the majority of those who participated in the events had been honest socialist patriots, they inevitably had aided the counterrevolution. This was the authoritative interpretation held by the ideology of the Kádár regime over the course of the next three decades.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary, in the official socialist media dominated by this neo-dogmatic cultural policy, several programs, articles, and reminiscences focused on the October events. Of these, the documentary series entitled *Velünk élő történelem* [Our living history], the chief editor of which was Berecz, reached the widest audience.[13] The series was evidence of a search for a new narrative form and technological pathways that would convince society of the regime's interpretation of 1956. On the one hand, the first three episodes each had the same form. Specifically, they all conjured the history of the counterrevolution by means of "talking-head" interviews with witnesses of the events at the time. The series therefore opened up the emotional dimensions of the counterrevolution by presenting personal testimonies.

10 Révész, *Aczél és korunk*, 359–360.

11 „Ma is építünk a drágán szerzett, megszenvedett tapasztalatokra: Berecz János beszéde a Szolnok Megyei Tanács ünnepi ülésén" [Today we are still building on the dearly acquired experiences that we suffered: János Berecz's speech on the ceremonial session of the Szolnok County Council], *Népszabadság,* November 5, 1986, 3.

12 "Az MSZMP Ideiglenes Központi Bizottságának határozata, 1956. december 5."

13 Cf. László Rózsa, "Tragédiától sorsfordulóig" [From tragedy to a change of fortune], *Népszabadság,* November 1, 1986, 7.

The six episodes of *Velünk élő történelem* were aired on Hungarian Television beginning in the middle of October.[14] On the day after the airing of the first episode, Pál Geszti, the cultural editor of the daily newspaper *Magyar Hírlap*, published an article about the series. This article's aim was to smooth out the dissimilarities between this official representation of events and personal experiences of the history itself. For Geszti, it was clear that the experiences witnessed by the generation of the time did not correspond to the meanings fashioned in the official representations. "Yesterday evening," he wrote, "the first episode shown on television certainly generated as many reactions, questions, memories, and emotions as there were viewers." Geszti attempted to eliminate contradictions surrounding the episode's reception by comparing a "complex, scientific, essential" representation of history to the contingency of lived history and personal experiences. "The *individual* experience is always *contingent* and depends on chance." Therefore, "there is no certainty that what was *lived* by XY as a witness or a participant really represented (some kind of) *truth*."[15] *Velünk élő történelem* had to base its authenticity on the relationship between the official truth of the counterrevolution and a minority of thoroughly sifted, personal memories.

The director of the series, Mihály Mátray, divided the roughly one hundred individuals appearing on screen into two groups: the first included witnesses and 1956 participants, and the second consisted of historians presenting nothing beyond the results of their historical research.[16] Berecz was part of this latter group, in the role of historian. Ervin Hollós, the most qualified expert on the counterrevolution and the author of several propaganda books, was also featured. Hollós's objectivity, however, can be seriously questioned. As of April, 1957, in his role as deputy head and then chief of the sub-department for counterintelligence against internal reaction in the Ministry of Interior, Hollós took an active part in the retaliatory measures taken against alleged participants in the revolution.[17] The backbone of the narratives consisted of reminiscences by the political elite of the Kádár regime. The reflections uttered by Antal

14 The first three episodes are available at Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest. Call no. 306-0-4:24/2–4.

15 1. Pál Geszti, "Az az este, októberben [That night in October]," *Magyar Hírlap,* October 17, 1986, 3. Emphasis in the original.

16 Cf. G.L., "»Az életem muszterjével dolgozom…« Hogyan látja a rendező a Velünk élő történelmet?" ["I work with rushes of my life…" How does the director see Our Living History?], *Magyar Nemzet,* October 16, 1986, 6.

17 Ungváry, "Egyenes út a csúcsra," 30–31.

Apró, György Marosán, Valéria Benke, and Béla Biszku smoothly fitted into the "complex, scientific" picture of the counterrevolution, since these agents were among those who actively shaped the official genesis myth of the Kádár era. By simultaneously presenting reminiscences of others, including radio operators, workers' militiamen, and university students, the series aimed to demonstrate that the counterrevolutionary narrative created and nurtured by a narrow political elite was actually "true" on the level of widespread social experience.

The first three episodes of *Velünk élő történelem* primarily illustrated the course of counterrevolutionary violence, depicting the process leading from the peaceful demonstration on October 23 to the siege of the headquarters of the Hungarian Radio and the tumultuous brutality committed by the counterrevolutionary rabble on Köztársaság [Republic] Square on October 30. When depicting how events unfolded at Köztársaság Square, the tale of violence came to a crescendo. From as early as November, 1956, the tragic and undoubtedly brutally violent siege of the Party house formed the hub of the image projected by the Kádár-regime concerning how events had occurred.[18] Köztársaság Square was used as the most obvious evidence in support of the official characterization of events as an example of a counterrevolution and raging white terror. László Laboda, a member of Workers' Council in Diósgyőr, offered the following recollection:

> Another trauma in my life was that […] next to the town hall of Ózd two men were hanging upside down, they had been… brutally stabbed with a pitchfork or I don't know what kind of tool, their clothes had been torn off, they were hanging, covered in blood. It is not possible to forget that, even if one were to live a hundred years.[19]

The dramatic atmosphere of this scene was guaranteed by the piercing sounds of a violin in the background and the sharply-focused camera shot which closed in on Laboda's face while he was relaying the bloody details.

According to *Velünk élő történelem*, in contrast to the "passive route" taken by Imre Nagy in stemming the tide of the brutal counterrevolution, the members of the Kádárist political elite had been actively searching for the right solution. György Marosán repeatedly swore that—had it been given in time—the command to fire would have crushed the counterrevolution. This particular opinion from

18 Lénárt, "Az erőszak tere," 81. For the Kádár era as a constant historiographical project and for the representation of counterrevolutionary violence see also Apor, "Spectacular History," 337–62.

19 *Velünk élő történelem, III*. HU OSA Call no. 306-0-4:24/2–4.

the dogmatic politician, however, was not his reminiscence of the past so much as it was a revitalization of the offer of the Kádár regime and a justification of the brutal retaliations. According to the documentary series, Kádár's counter-government, which was set up on November 4, provided the "real turn." The last two episodes related the story of how society's trust had been gained by the Revolutionary Workers' Peasants' Government and how socialist Hungary had been renewed.

In the actual political context of 1986, the configurations of "continuity" and "resumption" gained new meaning. In one of his articles, Berecz underscored the notion that, "as a consequence of the traditions of the Hungarian revolutionary labor movement, by necessity there were people who have accepted the *break* with the mistakes of the previous years, and meanwhile the *continuity* and the *renewal* in socialism."[20] Berecz summoned the last two nouns as a means of mobilizing the Party's potential to resolve the actual upcoming problems. "Our Party has already many times given examples of this renewal"; "this time, the task ahead of us is to find new and necessary answers for any new and unresolved problems in society."[21] *Continuity*—in the sense of expropriating the meaning of history—had to express the absolute right to do this: "the character of continuity is that history belongs entirely to us, together with its successes, its failures, and their lessons."[22]

The makers of the series did not properly assess the risks involved in demonstrating this absolute control over history by means of presenting the personal memories of the political elite. In *Velünk élő történelem*, the October events were represented within the framework of personal recollections, thereby implying that the reminiscences of the political elite were comparable to the memories of the television audiences. *Velünk élő történelem* definitely met with resistance on the part of viewers who remembered the events of 1956 differently. Imprisoned for counterrevolutionary activity at the end of 1956, Imre Simonyi listened to RFE's commemorative programs while also viewing *Velünk élő történelem*. While Simonyi rated the RFE programs as "incredibly good," the performance given by Marosán on television had him alternating between wild laughter and gripping the arms of his chair until his knuckles turned white.[23]

20 Berecz, "Gondolatok a nemzet és a munkásmozgalom történetéről," 12. Emphasis in the original.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Árpási, *Költő, az innenső parton*, 132–33.

Thus, *Velünk élő történelem* was not received entirely according to the official plan. This counter-productivity was due not only to the propagandistic nature of the series. In this period of increasing political-economic crisis and an emerging discussion among different dissident groups in Hungary, the reiteration of the old offer of the Kádár regime came off as anachronistic. Furthermore, if the issue of 1956 was the "litmus test" of the Party's ability to change, this dogmatic restoration of the official interpretation of 1956 partially undermined any attempt by the Party to project an image of reform. The events held in memory of the 30th anniversary completely disappointed a society eagerly awaiting comprehensive reforms that were expected to offer a way out of a stagnating situation. In consequence, many people began looking for alternative ideas and information, while many more became interested in learning more about what had actually happened in 1956.[24]

Radio Free Europe and Warrants of Authenticity

In the aftermath of the 1956 Revolution, socialist propaganda made serious accusations against RFE, essentially laying blame for the tragic events on the radio station. These charges included statements that—among other transgressions—RFE had urged Hungarians to fight the Soviet army, promised Western assistance, and provoked Soviet intervention.[25] While admittedly overestimating the radio's role, socialist propaganda indirectly suggested that Western assistance was a vain hope and communism was there to stay. At the same time, "these historic events made clear both the importance and the responsibility of [RFE], and also proved that this venture would not be merely a temporary one."[26] Consequentially, RFE was forced to analyze and reorganize its attitudes concerning both program policies and its practices of information acquisition, including research and archival work.[27] After 1956, RFE also undertook the mission of preserving the memory of the revolution, and during the decades of the Kádár regime it regularly broadcasted programs commemorating 1956.

Considering the reception of these programs, very limited feedback is available in the so-called "Information Items" gathered at RFE's Munich headquarters as a means of reducing the state of isolation in which the radio

24 Litván, "1956 emlékének szerepe," 49.

25 Johnson, "To the Barricades."

26 Mink, "The Archives in Munich," 45.

27 Ibid.

station found itself regarding information coming from the Eastern bloc. These documents were generally based on correspondence conducted with anonymous sources located within the bloc or interviews provided by Eastern emigrants and defectors. Their reliability and credibility were carefully checked by various filtering systems. Even if the items "later proved to be reliable historical data," they nonetheless must be interpreted with a due degree of circumspection, since they may be the products of an interview situation filled with suspicion and ruled by certain sets of presumptions.[28] Concerning feedback provided by listeners on the RFE commemorative programs, another source of evidence is also available: the transcripts of messages recorded by the radio's answering machine in the second half of the 1980s.

Set up in 1985, the answering machine[29] was intended to modernize the communication channel between RFE and its audiences, while also replacing correspondence. The answering machine recorded listeners' calls and messages in two-minute intervals, around the clock, 24 hours a day. While transcripts of the calls were handed to editors, the most important and relevant messages and questions were answered every week during a ten-minute long program entitled *Hallgatók Fóruma* [Listeners' forum].[30] In comparison to the items, these telephone call transcripts have three advantages. Firstly, listeners called the answering machine of their own volition, hence the suspicion and presumptions that could eventually pervade interview situations[31] were lacking. Secondly, the transcripts—appended with additional comments only in extreme cases—preserved the listeners' views without any kind of distortion or condensing. Finally, in contrast to the anonymous reports found in the Items, in certain and limited cases it was possible to identify the callers; it is, however, true, that those contacting the RFE from within the bloc characteristically used code names.

Hungarian listeners usually called the answering machine service in order to comment on the programs, request that broadcasts be repeated, complain about the signal's frequently bad quality, share jokes on the current political situation, etc. In the case of important public affairs—such as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, demonstrations against the Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros Waterworks, and

28 Szilágyi, "Records of the Hungarian Unit," 55.

29 Answering machines were also set up in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. On the latter case see: Hagen, "Calling Out to Tune in."

30 See Borbándi, *Magyarok az Angol Kertben,* 378–80.

31 "A question such as 'What's the news at home?' and the intimidated tourist already suspects some provocation" – a document casts light on the consequences of the socialist propaganda against RFE. *Reaction to anti-RFE propaganda campaign*, Item no. 1228/69; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

the soccer match loss of 6:0 against the Soviets at the 1986 World Cup—the number of calls increased. In autumn, 1986, many callers discussed the merits of RFE programs commemorating the Hungarian revolution: "Great work, boys, great work, girls. I cannot say anything else. I haven't heard for 30 years […] such a beautiful and touching […] commemoration. If the Hungarian soccer team had played like this, the net of the Soviets would have been worn out."[32]

Another listener left the following message:

> First of all, I would like to say thank you for the carefully compiled documentary program which was broadcast these days on the occasion of the freedom fight. I myself, who am over 60 years old, took part in the 1956 events, and I can testify that the documentary is trustworthy down to its smallest detail.[33]

Naturally, one could cite additional examples of this kind of feedback. In these comments, of the RFE's rich selection of commemorative programs, the documentary programs edited by László Kasza (entitled *Thirteen Days of the Revolution and Freedom Fight* and *The Decline of Freedom: The History of Twelve Day*s) was mentioned the most frequently. Following in the footsteps of previous RFE broadcasts,[34] these two programs contained a chronological examination of the events leading to the victory of the revolution, piecing this historical episode together day by day. This was then followed by the history of the fight for freedom against Soviet intervention. These programs generally consisted of a well-edited montage of audio-recordings dating from the period of the revolution, as well as recollections by witnesses.

As a very characteristic feature of the feedback, listeners emphasized the role of the original audio-documents. "I spoke of this program to several acquaintances, and it was the general opinion that such programs are very necessary—with the help of original sound recordings—to refute the official lies that distort the past."[35] In 1986, in the *Hallgatók Fóruma*, some opinions were broadcast which, like the denouncements made by socialist propaganda, accused the radio of vulgar rabble-rousing. On the following day, many listeners

32 *Telefonhívások 69,* 8; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

33 *Telefonhívások 68,* 14; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

34 *1956 – Napról napra. Szabad Európa Rádió, München, 1974*, Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum Médiatára, Saáry Éva hanggyűjteménye

35 *Opinion on RFE*, Item no. 1977/69.; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

called the answering machine to deny these charges indignantly. One such caller offered the following argument:

> Did these listeners actually listen to the documentary serial or are they deaf? All right, if we want, we can give credence to László Kasza, if we don't want to, we don't have to. But I must ask whether these 50-minute programs consisted of only the voice of László Kasza? Like hell! They were filled with conclusive evidence, since they evoked programs broadcast at the time by Radio Free Kossuth.[36]

It is worth noting that RFE possessed the most complete archival collection of broadcasts made in Hungary at the time of the revolution. In addition to other techniques used to acquire information, RFE "closely followed the events in the so-called 'target-countries' by listening to and recording the official radio broadcasts coming through the air from the communist world."[37] During the revolution, the Hungarian Desk's attention was focused entirely on the events unfolding in Hungary. At the time, Radio (Free) Kossuth and an increasing number of amateur, independent radio stations served as the main source of information. Throughout each day of the revolution, their broadcasts were being recorded on magnetic tape by RFE's archival machinery. As a result, a unique collection of historical archives was created that served as a source of original audio-documents to be broadcast again and again into Hungary during Kádár's regime.

To paraphrase Jacques Derrida, the various types of technological apparatuses used to record, store and replay sound allow phantoms from the past to come back and haunt us,[38] thereby making an apparently absent entity present again. "The realm of the dead is as extensive as the storage and transmission capabilities of a given culture,"[39] writes Friedrich Kittler. When replayed thirty years later, the audio-inserts originally recorded in 1956 resulted in the resurrection of both the martyrs of the revolution and the apparently dead revolution. When mapping this resurrection, this study turns to the thesis of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, an author mostly interested in the "*presentification* of past worlds, that is the techniques that produce the impression (or, rather, the illusion) that worlds

36 *Telefonhívások 72,* 6–7; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

37 Rév, "The Enemy-archives," 15.

38 Cf. with Derrida's words in Ken McMullen's film entitled *Ghost Dance* from 1983.

39 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 13.

of the past can become tangible again."[40] Gumbrecht—while "challeng[ing] a broadly institutionalized tradition according to which interpretations, that is, the identification and/or attribution of meaning, is […] the exclusive core practice […] of the humanities"[41]—suggests that we "conceive of aesthetic experience as an oscillation (and sometimes as an interference) between 'presence effects' and 'meaning effects'."[42] When discussing the "production of presence," Gumbrecht focuses on the materialities of communication. According to his definition, "to speak of 'the production of presence' implies that the (spatial) tangibility effect coming from the communication media is subjected, in space, to movement of greater or lesser proximity, and of greater or lesser intensity."[43] When transmitting the memory of the revolution, the replayed original audio-recordings brought about these "presence effects," thereby guaranteeing a high level of proximity and intensity, i.e., the "touching on the bodies" of listeners. Thus, the semantics of the RFE commemorative programs originated from the physical effects generating the illusion of presence. Divided by the generation gap into either witnesses or people with no personal memories of the revolution, listener groups perceived the "presence effects" according to different constellations.

First of all, throughout the 1986 commemorative programs, the "scene of radio listening"[44] from 1956 was repeated, though it transmitted a different experience. In the 1950s, listeners had to become accustomed to the jamming against "enemy radio stations." Jamming, however—as István Rév described the situation—"did not simply aim to make the enemy broadcasts inaudible." Rather, "the noise also established and confirmed the presence of the Communist authorities in the air, and thus in the private sphere [...] constantly remind[ing] the listener of the continuous surveillance."[45] When all jamming facilities were closed down on October 24, 1956, the lack of the deliberately generated noise transmitted a clear message: "We [the West] are here, and they [the Communists or the Soviets] have gone."[46] In this historic moment, media technology supported the collective imagination in the face of mere reality. Thirty years later, when listening to the original recordings, the same voices emerged from

40 Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 94.

41 Ibid., 1–2.

42 Ibid., 17.

43 Ibid.

44 "Scene of listening" is used here in a way analogous to the term "scene of reading," describing the objective complexity of the reading process. See Benne, "Gegenständlichkeitsszenen."

45 Rév, "Just Noise?" 244.

46 Ibid., 244–45.

the same "box." Conversely, in contrast to the original "scene of listening," the replayed recordings came to represent quite the opposite meaning. On the one hand, the shredded, bad quality of the recordings underscored the fragility of traces of memory concerning the revolution. On the other hand, the majority of listeners—as a consequence of their social conditioning—attributed the bad reception not to atmospheric noise, but to the jamming that had actually been halted in 1972.[47] Thus, the bad quality of the commemorative programs broadcasting original recordings once again signaled the presence of the repressive Communist authorities, albeit inadvertently.

Secondly, "reviving the already dim recollection with original recordings"[48] also meant that the "scene of radio listening" was once more occupied by the main players in the revolution, brought back to life both through recordings and personal recollections. The interconnection between the replayed recordings and the stimulated development of memories offered the experience of reliving the events of the revolution all over again. One person, who accepted the broadcast programs as representations of her own memories, left the following message:

> In 1956, I was a student in my first year at the University of Horticulture. On [October] 23, I was present at the general assembly at the Technical University, and afterward I was everywhere, wherever it was possible, until November 4. Now, as I listen to your reminiscences, I am reliving those minutes again and [I testify to] the credibility of the witness, declaring with absolute faith that everything happened exactly the way it was related. God bless you for these true words and for keeping the memory of the revolution alive.[49]

The program's authenticity was based on the relationship between personal recollection and original recordings, which mutually legitimized each other. The "credibility of the witness" included the compatibility between these different perspectives: "those who listened to it were convinced that it was arranged by an editor who had been an eye-witness of the events in 1956."[50]

In the case of the younger generation, the authenticity of these programs was established through recognition of the idiosyncratic nature of the recorded voices. Here, the reception process was situated within an acousmatic situation,

47 Ibid., 245.

48 *Opinion on RFE*, Item no. 1977/69.; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

49 *Telefonhívások 68,* 13; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

50 *Opinion on RFE*, Item no. 1977/69; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.

since the proper source of the sound coming from the radio remained unseen.[51] Listeners were therefore forced to confront both the phantom character of the voice as well as the unlocalizable character of the missing body. Consequently, the problem of identifying the two also arose. The rupture resulting from the separation of the voice from the body, however, was not complete, even in the cases of voices replayed in several transposals. The tone, the pitch and the volume of the speech sound attests to the build of the body which becomes the "organon" of the announcement.[52] Following this train of thought, the speech sound of the revolutionary players—after being separated onto storage devices and transmission media—gave the impression that it was still permeated by the traces of the body. In other words, the recordings allowed listeners to recognize idiosyncratic voices belonging to identifiable bodies.

A listener who at the time of the revolution was eighteen months old referred to the idiosyncrasy of the voices coming from the radio. In certain cases—such as that of the well-known voice of the Communist Secretary—he could identify the speech sound based on his own experiences: "The audio-documents resembled a real experience for me, like the radio speeches of Imre Nagy or the radio speech of János Kádár, with the promises that he has not kept. *If I had not heard it from his own mouth, I would have not believed it, really*."[53] For the younger generation, this type of identification could verify the authenticity of other documents as well.

This authenticity was crucial since the RFE commemorative programs drew on many historical sources that had been silenced by the one-party state system. In April, 1986, a listener thought it high time to wash Kádár's dirty linen in public, especially for the sake of the younger generation.[54] This listener's request was granted.[55] In Kasza's program, Kádár's speech—originally broadcast on November 1, 1956 by Radio Free Kossuth—was replayed. While also informing the public of the establishment of the new party, MSZMP, this speech included Kádár's statement describing the events as "the people's glorious uprising."[56] This document, which contradicted the official stance later adopted by Kádár

51 Chion, *La voix au cinéma*, 29–41.

52 Krämer, "Negative Semiologie der Stimme," 67.

53 *Telefonhívások 72,* 7; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1. Emphasis added.

54 *Telefonhívások 37*, 2; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

55 *A szabadság kapujában,* 213.

56 Of course, this was not the first time Kádár's speech was replayed: "The Communists above all were affected by Kádár's speech, which was a determined profession of faith in the armed revolution," reported one listener in 1969. (*Opinion on RFE*, Item no. 1977/69.; HU OSA 300-40-4 Box 9.)

as the head of the regime and thus raised significant questions concerning his character, was fully reviewed in the program.

The bad quality of the recording, however, meant that only a limited part of the tape could actually be replayed; the rest of the speech had to be read aloud.[57] This excerpt was only a few seconds long and unfortunately did not contain the words "glorious uprising." In spite of this technical difficulty, the recording still possessed the power to authenticate the essential standpoint of the program. The recording itself can be compared with an earlier published version of the speech found in the émigré journal *Magyar Füzetek* in 1981.[58] The transcript of the speech was accompanied by the reproduced title page of *Népszabadság*—the newspaper in which the speech was originally published—bearing the date November 2, 1956. This reproduction served as a trace of the primary inscription of the actual events, a small, but significant detail that escaped the purges of the memory policies of the Kádár regime. The mere presence of the otherwise illegible reproduction was to verify the entire transcript of the text. This case of "iconic verification" can be compared to the "acoustic verification" accomplished through the partial replay of a recording that created an aura of authenticity for the entire broadcast. Thus, "presence effects" worked to strengthen "meaning effects" in the sense that perception of the physical characteristics of the original documents pervaded the semantic dimension of their reception.

Listeners could not avoid the influence of the intense interplay between "presence effects" and "meaning effects." One of them swore never to forget the recording of Rákóczi Station broadcasting from the city of Sztálinváros[59] in the days of Soviet intervention. In his call to the answering machine he retold what he had heard: "»This is Rákóczi Station, Hungary, this is Rákóczi Station, Hungary! Free Europe, Munich, Free Europe, Munich! Help us, help us! Soviets have marched into Dunapentele. They are firing on our city. We beg you, help us, help us!« Believe me, I am not a sentimental man, but my eyes filled with tears."[60]

In the case of both generations, the narratives of the revolution were created according to the listeners' own past, "from within, not imported or imposed

57 *A szabadság kapujában*, 213.

58 "Kádár János 1956. november 1-jei rádióbeszéde," 212–16.

59 Sztálinváros, the name of which meant "Stalin City," was intended to be a model socialist city; it essentially replaced the village of Dunapentele and in 1961 was renamed Dunaújváros, which roughly means "new city on the Danube River."

60 *Telefonhívások 72,* 7; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

from without."[61] There was ample evidence attesting to their experiences of the revolution, which for them was historically verifiable and possessed great power to inspire.[62] This was also reflected in the counter-cultural practices which accompanied the act of listening to Western radio stations, which from the socialist perspective represented the "enemy."

The Phantom Voice and the Body of the Text

In October, 1985, an elderly woman left a message on the RFE's answering machine. Her story was both typical and yet unique.

> Good evening. Actually, I have been listening to the program by György Faludy on the radio. It recalls very, very beautiful memories of mine, because when I was young, we typed his poems and gave them to one another as a big, big present… […] I had quite a huge collection, but unfortunately my whole apartment burned down in 1956. I lived at the corner of Ferenc Avenue and Üllői Street. […] Well, these treasures of mine ceased to exist. How could I get access to the entire book?[63]

It was unusual that a listener shared her personal story in such an open and direct tone while also relating details concerning the cultural resistance of the 1950s. Her description of collecting, typing and disseminating texts by a poet interned in 1949 serves as a very early example of samizdat literature circulating beyond the bounds of censorship in Hungary.[64]

The localization of the apartment and the date of its destruction make it likely that this private samizdat collection disappeared during the Soviet intervention, in the course of the intense fighting that took place in the area around Corvin köz, not far from her apartment. This background information reveals the fragility of samizdat materials, showing that often it was difficult or impossible to preserve them for longer periods of time.

On the other hand, this story is also very characteristic in that it draws attention to the important role RFE played in transmitting cultural products that

61 Smith, "The 'Golden Age' and National Renewal," 227.

62 Ibid., 227–30.

63 *Telefonhívások 12*, 2; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

64 On the term "samizdat" see thematic issues of *Poetics Today:* "Publish and Perish: Samizdat and Underground Cultural Practices in the Soviet Bloc" (vol. 29, no. 4 [2008] and vol. 30, no. 1 [2009]) and *Samizdat, Tamizdat, and Beyond.*

remained out of reach during the decades of communism. The radio station, however, could make these cultural products available through its "phantom voice," which—like sound itself—"is more flux and fluid than material."[65] The dissolving, vanishing body of the radio's phantom voice urged listeners to reconstruct this body physically, to transform the fluid voice into some form of hard copy. In the case of the RFE's commemorative programs, generally three counter-cultural practices—recording or transcribing broadcasts (the phenomenon of so-called "radizdat" or "magnitizdat"),[66] buying materials in the West, or acquiring samizdat texts from local sources—came into play.

Under the name "Hungarian October," one of the most significant samizdat publishers during the 1980s, György Krassó published a 90-minute long audiocassette entitled *The Voice of the Hungarian Revolution* as a means of marking the 26th anniversary of the revolution.[67] The cassette included recordings of broadcasts by Western radios. Since only a few hundred copies were made, the cassette soon became inaccessible, in spite of the fact that private exchanges obviously added to the number of copies that were made.

It therefore comes as no surprise that in 1986 many listeners made sure to record the commemorative programs. "On behalf of a small group of listeners, I turn to you with the following request. While we succeeded in recording the commemorative program, the jamming sometimes was so extensive that important parts were incomprehensible."[68] The members of this "small group" requesting that the programs edited by Kasza be repeated were most likely working together to copy and share materials among one another.

In 1987, another message providing evidence of one unique case of "radizdat" made its way to RFE's answering machine. The listener—who was from the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, judging from the fact that he used a pseudonym—happily reported that on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the revolution, a 500-paged typewritten book had been prepared bearing the title, *The Hungarian Revolution, 1956: Commemorative Radio Programs and Historical Series*.[69] The ability to prepare such a typewritten book meant previous broadcasts had to have been recorded on magnetic tape. The whole year that passed between

65 Krämer, "Negative Semiologie der Stimme," 67.

66 Steiner, "Introduction," 613–20.

67 *A magyar forradalom hangja.*

68 *Telefonhívások 68*, 9–10; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 1.

69 *Telefonhívások 118*, 4; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 2.

the recording process and the completion of the typewritten product shows the enormous effort made to create a hard copy of the "phantom voice."

Including callers from both sides of the Iron Curtain, the largest number of messages was left for RFE by people who wanted to buy the commemorative programs in cassette form. While the radio workers felt it impossible to publish the programs in cassette form,[70] the overwhelming interest and large number of requests eventually convinced them to publish the commemorative programs in book form. Published at the beginning of 1988, the book *At the Doorstep of Freedom* could be ordered from France for 24 German marks.[71] In September, 1988, during the program *Hallgatók Fóruma*, Júlia Lángh was able to point callers interested in the 1986 commemorative programs to Hungarian bookstores located in the West.[72]

This RFE publication came to Krassó's attention. Before his brother living in London died, Krassó was finally able to get a Western passport. In 1986 he established the "Hungarian October" independent news agency in London, although this did not mean that he abandoned his samizdat publication activities, especially in respect to the widespread practice of reprinting Western publications in samizdat form. After RFE's book was published,[73] Krassó organized its samizdat reprint in Hungary, including the original typeset and the logo of "Hungarian October" Publishing House. In this version, however, the paper displayed the poor quality and brown-black colors typical of samizdat editions.[74] Thanks to the original and samizdat edition, the book *At the Doorstep of Freedom* was available both in Hungary and the in West.

As a consequence of counter-cultural practices that arose as a result of the act of listening to radio broadcasts, materials concerning the Hungarian revolution were first stored and then broadcast by the radio stations, later entering the listeners' private archives in some kind of a hard copy form. During this process, the materials that had been broadcasted changed their form and sometimes their media as well (e.g. from magnetic tape to another magnetic tape or a typescript, or from magnetic tape to a book, and then a samizdat

70 *Telefonhívások 121*, 11; HU OSA 300-40-14 Box 2.

71 See *A szabadság kapujában* and *Levelesláda* (Rajki László, SZER, Hallgatók Fóruma), München, 1988. május 28., (MTI Hírarchívum 1988-2015, Rádiófigyelés).

72 *Válasz a hallgatóknak* (Láng Júlia, SZER, Hallgatók Fóruma), München, 1988. szeptember 24., (MTI Hírarchívum 1988–2015, Rádiófigyelés).

73 The book's cover design was made by Ágnes Háy, Krassó's common-law wife.

74 *Magyar szamizdat* (Kasza László, SZER), München, 1988. október 16., (MTI Hírarchívum 1988–2015, Rádiófigyelés).

reprint). Through these practices, listeners attempted to transform a past that they recognized as authentic into physical materials that were available within arm's reach and beyond the limits imposed by time. Accompanied by an audio recording, a samizdat edition or book published in the West guaranteed that personal recollections could be revived, thereby allowing people to experience the events of the revolution again and again. The externalization of the memory of the revolution and the dissemination of the vessels in which this memory was preserved created little pockets of resistance to the memory politics of the Kádár regime.

Conclusion

While a vigorous attempt was made to reassert the legitimacy of the official assessment of the 1956 Revolution and the rhetoric of the official depictions of the events during the commemoration of its 30th anniversary, RFE's commemorative programs broadcast from the West offered an alternative narrative that was accessible to a significant segment of Hungarian society. *Velünk élő történelem*, a re-projection of the counterrevolution rhetoric used by the political elite of the Kádár regime, exemplified and brought to the fore the profound discrepancies between the official historical abstraction and people's personal memories. In the end, this official interpretation proved counterproductive. In contrast, RFE commemorative programs were successful in their presentation of the past on the basis of personal recollections, based in part on the approach according to which "understanding the past as history primarily happens in the course of memory, before historical abstraction can settle over it, generously obscuring the fact of this genesis."[75]

Within the process of these documentary strategies, the issue of *authenticity* underlies the question of how to create a representation of the historical events of 1956. In the case of RFE, the Gumbrechtian "presence effects" played an important role in creating a kind of authenticity rooted in archival practices and information acquisition, the media-technological conditions of recording and replaying human voices, as well as the listeners' social conditioning and personal recollections. Last but not least, the programs' narrative structure provided the appropriate vehicle for this process. The special configuration of these elements

75 Gyáni, "Kollektív emlékezet és történetírás," 75. The author reflects on a train of thought written by Patrick Hutton (*History as an Art of Memory*).

guaranteed the programs' effectiveness, reviving memories of the revolution from the chronological distance of three decades. While in the case of *Velünk élő történelem* archival documents functioned only as illustrations of narrative, archival recordings took on lives of their own in the RFE broadcasts, serving as "presence effects." From this perspective, it can be argued that the "practices of reconstructing" the "phantom voice" were motivated not only by the fluidity of the voice, but also by its "presence effects." In other words, this phenomenon was influenced by the ephemeral character of the presence, i.e. the feeling "that we cannot hold on to those presence effects, that they […] are ephemeral."[76]

In the three-decade-long struggle over interpretations of 1956, the year 1986 brought a significant change. This change was brought about by the fact that RFE's commemorative programs—in comparison to the influence of opposition groups active as of the late 1970s—created a far wider social basis for the interpretation according to which the October events constituted a revolution, not a counterrevolution.[77] If "the first victory of the Kádár era was the successful transformation of shared silence into social oblivion,"[78] RFE deserves credit for reviving and replaying the revolution in 1986, while attacking the Kádár regime at its weakest point: its genesis myth. By making voices travel through both time and space, RFE could bridge the gap between past and present, between different agents and distant parts of a divided Europe, obliterating the amnesia of the Kádár era, which had hampered listeners' efforts to maintain their own personal recollections.

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76 Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence*, 111.

77 It is very hard to estimate the extent of radio audiences, listening habits, and the counter-cultural practices that evolved in connection with it. According to one estimate, about 23 percent of the adult population listened more or less regularly to the RFE in 1986-87, while the habit of listening to the radio was highly correlated to "word-of-mouth" communication, resulting in the wider dissemination of information (Hann, "Éteri verseny," 47–50).

78 György, *Néma hagyomány*, 76.

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In the Pull of the West: Resistance, Concessions and Showing off from the Stalinist Practice in Hungarian culture after 1956[1]

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The article explores the representation of Western culture in Hungarian journalism, print media, and public life in the months following the 1956 revolution, when the party lost its strict control over Hungarian society and only gradually was able to reassert its dominance in all spheres of life. Did representations of Western culture really constitute a kind of resistance, or should they perhaps be understood as concessions to prevalent public opinion? Or did they in fact harmonize in some way with the actual intentions of the people who crafted cultural policy? How did the content of newspapers begin to change in November 1956, clashing with the earlier "socialist cultural canon" by presenting formerly censured or anathematized Western cultural products and actors? How was the supply of movies adjusted to public opinion and then slowly readjusted to correspond to former norms? How did theater programs and plans for book publishing reflect the uncertainty of the period, resulting in the publication of works and performance of productions later criticized for bringing values to the stage that were contrary to the spirit of socialism? In this paper, I analyze a provisional period in which earlier norms of journalism, print media, and cultural life were partially suspended and the party made little or no real attempts to reassert Stalinist norms. Moreover, in this period the party did not deny or bring a stop to the de-Stalinization of cultural life, although it did repress open forms of cultural resistance to the Kádár-government.

Keywords: communist media, journalism, cultural transfers, cultural policy, de-Stalinization, resistance, revolution

> Soon a 'new voice' joined the buzz of the different languages. Jazz music rang out, and the dance started. First a black pair in white pullovers and britches started to follow the sound of the music with a miraculous sense of rhythm. In a little while, other dancers joined them... People laughed when a black fellow invited a Soviet girl to dance boogie-woogie. The Soviet girl, however hard she tried, could not follow her partner.[2]

1 The study was written with the support of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH) (project no. PD 109103) and the János Bolyai Fellowship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

2 "Izgalmas versenyek, olimpiai rekordok az olimpia hétfői napján," *Népszabadság*, November 27, 1956.

This is how the daily *Népszabadság* reported the rest-day of the summer Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956. This coverage was the first in Hungary to mention the Western fashion frenzy, boogie (and rock and roll), in a positive way since 1948, only a few weeks after the violent suppression of the revolution. But it harmonized well with the policy of peaceful coexistence of the Khrushchev regime. This short report was also the first occasion when *Népszabadság* came out from behind the closed world of politics (strikes, declarations, condemnations of resistance) and slowly started to act like a newspaper again instead of a political fly-bill.

The report was printed at a moment when the Kádár government gave up its last efforts to try to find a compromise with the representatives of the workers and intellectuals and was about to finalize its resolution of December 4.[3] The forums of publicity were narrow: only a few editorships were functioning, and the re-launch of any newspaper had to be allowed by the leading bodies of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.[4] The book publishing industry was paralyzed, and cinemas and theaters were closed for weeks, and later only opened in the afternoon because of the curfew, which lasted until April of the following year.

There were spectacular and well-explored cases of open resistance, from the "not a single word to Kádár" strike led by journalists[5] to the production of illegal newspapers and leaflets.[6] Even the central organ of the party tried to protest against defining the relationship between party leadership and communist journalists in a pre-1953 way. Others drew back into passive resistance and refused to publish. The Hungarian Writers' Association and the Association of Hungarian Journalists became important bases of resistance until the suspension of their autonomy, while their representatives also parleyed with the government.[7]

After November 4, Hungarian intellectuals followed a variety of trajectories and adopted an array of attitudes towards the government. Some left the country and continued to fight from abroad. Some undertook open resistance, risking

3 The December 4 resolution of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was the first official document to define the factors behind the "counterrevolution." It named four responsible agents: 1. the Rákosi–Gerő wing; 2. Imre Nagy and his circle; 3. the "reactionary forces" of the Horthy and capitalist regimes; 4. "international imperialism."

4 The HSWP authorized the relaunch of all newspapers one by one.

5 Sipos, "A Népszabadság letiltott cikke 1956 novemberében," 131–44.

6 Révész, *Egyetlen élet: Gimes Miklós története,* 330–49; Murányi, "A magyar sajtó története 1948-tól 1988-ig," 213.

7 See: Standeisky, *Az írók és a hatalom 1956–1963*; Cseh and Pór, *Zárt, bizalmas, számozott*.

imprisonment or even the death penalty. Others tried to cooperate with the new regime, hoping to preserve some of the achievements of 1956 and the de-Stalinization process, while many people decided to fall silent as a form of passive resistance. There were also intellectuals who cooperated with Kádár, whether wholeheartedly or striving for position and influence, or convincing themselves they were more useful to the people in these positions than others would be.

In this article I explore a particular way of assuming distance from official ideological framings and expressing criticism: the reception of Western pop-culture in post-1956 Hungarian public life. I examine Western pop-culture (i.e. what was characterized as "bourgeois" culture) in the Hungarian media and the debates to which it gave rise. Did it really constitute a kind of resistance, or could it rather be understood as a series of concessions to public opinion? Or did it actually help the regime achieve the goals of its cultural policy? In fact, all of these interpretations are valid. First, the references to Western culture in the early press of the Kádár era were intended to create distance from the cultural policy of Hungarian Stalinism, which Kádár's propaganda tried to dismiss as hopelessly and unnecessarily orthodox and dictatorial. However, the re-importation of images from Western popular culture into official socialist debates created new ways of developing criticism and critical attitudes towards Kádár's cultural policy too. I explore this double reception in thematic order by focusing on commercial culture, film, theater, literature, jazz, and art in two of the most important newspapers of the time: the party daily *Népszabadság* and the official youth magazine *Magyar Ifjúság*.

Western Commercial Culture in the Press

Népszabadság sarcastically noted the shift that took place between November 1956 and February 1957: "Nobody was enthusiastic about the gray journals of the Rákosi regime, while—lo!—the new, democratic press is received with such huge interest. Recently, they were burning newspapers on the streets, but now they keep queuing."[8] The author pointed out that the popularity of the youth weekly *Magyar Ifjúság* was not based on cultural value. (*Magyar Ifjúság* was allegedly so popular that it was sold on the streets in record time and after that one could

8 Géza Molnár, "Csikorgó fagyban," *Népszabadság*, February 8, 1957.

get it only from under the counter, when buying an issue of the official party paper *Népszabadság* or the trade union paper *Népakarat*).

What was the secret of *Magyar Ifjúság*? The first issue of the paper was released on January 5 1957, at a time when there were still many youth organizations and the Hungarian Communist Youth League, which later came to own the paper, had not yet been founded. On the front, children sleighing and Miss France were smiling at the reader. A genre that had previously been rebuked as the quintessence of American trash culture returned. The first comic strip in *Magyar Ifjúság* was a French translation (Misi and Döme Meet the Dragon), but in the second issue Hungarian characters appeared: The Adventures of the Dogs Blöki and Csöpi.[9] This constituted a surprising concession, since even in 1954 official cultural policy labelled comics as a tool that had been used to teach violence and condition people for war: "These books contain depictions of murders, sadistic stories, terrifying adventures, cruelty and bloodcurdling horror, and they are illustrated". They were even associated with fascism: "Many of these adventures are based on one single supernatural hero, who—as fascists suggested—is the only one able to save the crowd from their troubled situation by using power."[10]

Among the novelties of *Magyar Ifjúság* was a Tarzan serial, which was also banned after 1948 as inferior American mass culture. "Tarzan Wins" was published as a promotion of the newly launched Tarzan series of Kossuth Publishing House. The first part, Tarzan of the Apes, had already been published in late 1956 by Budapest Press, and was continued by the party publishing house in 1957.[11] Further Tarzan volumes only arrived in the mid-1960s. The plans of Európa Publishing House for 1957 included the crime stories of Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle, and Európa planned to print open-end crime stories following Western patterns: "In other countries, separate clubs are organized to solve such books, so we can hope that this idea will be welcome here, too," heralded the youth paper.[12]

The first issue also introduced Gina Lollobrigida and Luis Procuna, a Mexican actor-toreador. With this, an avalanche of Western stars began.[13] Over the course of the upcoming weeks, people were able to read about the cultic

9 Pál Veres and István Endrődi, "Blöki és Csöpi nyaklánca," *Magyar Ifjúság,* January 12, 1957.

10 "Tarzan győz," *Magyar Ifjúság,* January 5, 1957.

11 Burroughs, *Tarzan, a dzsungel fia*; Burroughs, *Tarzan visszatérése.*

12 G. I., "Dosztojevszkij és Conan Doyle, Babits Mihály és Sigmund Freud," *Népszabadság,* January 1, 1957.

13 "Melyik tetszik?," *Magyar Ifjúság* 1, January 5, 1957; "Esmeralda – Gina Lollobrigida," *Magyar Ifjúság,* January 5, 1957; Ferenc Simon Gy., "Dr. Torreádor," *Magyar Ifjúság,* January 5, 1957.

James Dean, the rock and roll icon Elvis Presley, actresses Elisabeth Taylor and Marylin Monroe (who in November 1964 could only be seen on the silver screen in *The Misfits*). *Népszabadság* tried to catch up with this tempo: in early 1957, it portrayed Kim Novak besides Monroe and Taylor.

The January 5 issue of *Magyar Ifjúság* also launched a column on world fashion, and it included an interview with András Bágya, head of department of light music at Magyar Rádió, about jazz.[14] Even stranger things happened: sexuality was seen as one of the opiates of the decadent West, but not reporting on it. "Wow, how pretty," proclaimed the Christmas edition of *Népszabadság* in a caption above a picture of Miss France in a bikini. The typist from Nice greeted the Hungarian readers from the back of a donkey.[15] *Magyar Ifjúság* also captured the attention of its readership with a beauty queen in issue one, and it continued with a portrait of actress Francoise Arnoul in a bikini and a handsome French in tabloid style.[16] Allegedly "decadent" and "commercial" Western habits also penetrated the Hungarian environment: the weekly showed the winner of the beauty contest of the National Association of Hungarian Students.[17] However, a month later the same newspaper condemned "bourgeois hypocrisy" for surrounding beauty contests with fame and glitter while the winner could be rejected as a teacher in FRG.[18] A national beauty contest was not held again until 1985.

Kádár himself spoke highly critically of the work of *Népszabadság* on the session of the Budapest party activists on January 16 1957:

> But it is inequitable for the central organ of the party to report murder cases with mighty letters on the front page and [spice up] the article, which is of theoretical importance, with a picture of a half-naked dancer, while they move the important declarations of the party and the government and the important manifestations of the international workers' movement to different pages so that you can't find the sequel.[19]

14 András Bágya, "Merre tart a jazz?," *Magyar Ifjúság,* January 5, 1957.

15 "Hű de csinos!," *Népszabadság*, December 25, 1956.

16 "Csak tizenhat éven felülieknek;" "Ki akar férjhez menni?," *Magyar Ifjúság*, January 12, 1957.

17 "Gáts Lívia a szépségkirálynő," *Magyar Ifjúság*, March 15, 1957.

18 "Szégyen-e szépségkirálynőnek lenni?," *Magyar Ifjúság,* May 31, 1957.

19 Némethné Vágyi and Urbán, *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt ideiglenes vezető testületeinek jegyzőkönyvei II,* 51.

We can surely add the report from Paris to the "bourgeois tendencies." The report invited Hungarian readers to popular striptease bars like Foliés Bergére and Venus to offer accounts of "colourful" shows and dancers covered by fig-leaves. However, for the sake of order, the report added that a French worker cannot afford such fun ("my friend, Beuval, earns this money [the price of 3 bottles of champagne] for a week's worth of work at Renault"), and it made specific mention of homeless people lying under newspapers by the Seine River.[20]

At the end of January, the Provisional Executive Committee of Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) discussed the work of *Népszabadság* and *Magyar Ifjúság* and concluded that, though their work was not flawless, they could be regarded as supportive of the government, unlike the Hungarian News Agency and *Népakarat*.[21] It was not easy to achieve a balance: people who wanted to make a newspaper different from Stalinist times had to follow the expectations of the party and the audience at the same time, the majority of which would not bother listening to talk of any of the outstanding Soviet achievements, but rather thirsted for news and information about the West. It seemed that interesting journals could only be edited with Western star-portraits, technical novelties, and a pinch of eroticism in the first months of 1957. However, even after this, exprobatory path-seeking efforts were paved with some piquant circuits. What else could have explained the fact that two months later the notion of the lascivious nightlife of the West was again "debunked" in a lengthy article. The journalist (a protocol guest of the newly launched Budapest–Brussels flight) balanced his report on Boeuf sur le Toit club by visiting an anti-fascist place of memory, the fortress of Brendonk.[22]

Concessions and Renewed Cultural Policy: Ideology Disappears

Kádár also accused the editors of *Népszabadság* of smuggling a characterization of the West as the "greater world" into the newspaper.[23] Nevertheless, the government assumed that there were anti-Soviet emotions among the population,

20 B. Gy., "A Pigalle titkai – Meztelen görlök között a "Venus"-ban," *Népszabadság*, January 1, 1957.

21 István Friss called the news editing practice of the national news agency "counterrevolutionary propaganda," and he labeled *Népakarat* "anti-police." Némethné Vágyi and Urbán, *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt ideiglenes vezető testületeinek jegyzőkönyvei II*, 33.

22 István Árkus, "Az éjszakai Brüsszel," *Népszabadság*, March 10, 1957; Idem, "A breendonki erőd figyelmeztetése a mához," *Népszabadság*, March 13, 1957.

23 "What 'greater world' is something without the Soviet Union, without the socialist world? That is the capitalist world, and don't write 'greater world', but write news from the capitalist world. After reading

which is best illustrated by the films that were offered after November 1956. Soviet films disappeared for months: they were cautiously reintroduced beginning in February 1957 by local movie companies. *Népszabadság* printed the first cinema program on November 29, when cinemas were open between 11am and 4pm, according to the curfew. The selection of films was based on the 169 films confirmed by the General Directorate for Films: 29 Hungarian, 33 from socialist countries, and the rest (107 films, i.e. 63% percent, well over half) were from Western countries. Felszabadulás played *Fan-Fan the Tulip*, Csillag played *The Red and the Black*, Tinódi played the comedy *Papa, Mama, My Woman and Me* (presented for the French Film Days in 1956), and Toldi opted for *The Thief of Bagdad*. The list of licensed Soviet films was compiled only in January "with the political caution justified by the political atmosphere." Salaries for employees in the movie theaters depended in part on the number of people who actually came to see the movies. However, this factor was no longer taken into consideration in the case of Soviet films.[24]

The audiences for Western films, in contrast, were huge in 1957. The share of the viewers of Soviet films fell back significantly, even compared to 1956, when this tendency had begun. In 1957, every second cinema-goer opted for a Western film, while the number of Soviet films did not reach 10 percent of the total.

	Hungarian	Soviet	Socialist	Other	Mixed
1956	18	19	18	42	3
1957	22	9	13	52	4

Chart 1. Distribution of Hungarian audience by the place of origin of films in 1957 (Source: Hungarian National Archives (MNL OL) – The report of the Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Council on the operation of cinemas)[25]

As the General Directorate for Films put it: "we strove to restore the tranquility of mind of the audience with films." In the name of tranquility, 40 films were presented from capitalist countries, along with 12 Hungarian and

the paper, I have the feeling that Dulles is fighting heroic battles for the peace of mankind and only dark forces hinder him." Némethné Vágyi and Urbán, *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt ideiglenes vezető testületeinek jegyzőkönyvei II*, 40.

24 Report for the Metropolitan Council EC on the work of Budapest cinemas. (November 1957). Hungarian National Archives (=Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, hereafter MNL OL) XIX-I-22 16. d.; András Berkesi to the General Directorate of Film (July 22, 1957). MNL OL XIX-I-22 25. d.

25 MNL OL XIX-I-22 16. d.

63 socialist films. The composition of the 98 films of the previous year was the following: 9 Hungarian, 59 socialist, and 31 Western. In 1958, 33.3 percent and in 1959 28.4 percent of the film premiers were imported from the non-socialist countries, so opening to Western cultural products had begun earlier, actually as early as 1954. In 1956/57, the proportion of the films from socialist countries dropped temporarily. [26] *Magyar Ifjúság* reported that the negotiations would begin with the Motion Picture Export Company in Paris at the end of January 1957.[27] Moreover, the negotiations were successful, and three films were accepted in 1957.[28] The first one was the most commercial: *Trapeze*, starring Gina Lollobrigida, Tony Curtis, and Burt Lancaster. So Hollywood returned to Hungary a year after the fall of the revolution with a spectacular feature film.

Nagyvilág, the Hungarian journal for international literature, which had been founded on the model of the Soviet *Inostrannaya Literatura*, underwent a similar shift. Its first issue was published in October 1956, and its programmatic editorial was written by György Lukács, who had been marginalized under the policy of Andrey Aleksandrovich Zhdanov known as Zhdanovism, according to which the government should exert strict control over cultural policy and foster extreme anti-Western bias. The philosopher-aesthete emphasized that the seclusion after 1948 was the continuation of earlier Hungarian provincialism and was a consequence of weakness and uncertainty, both under Horthy and Rákosi: "Only one kind of struggle can be effective against provincialism: real, first-hand knowledge about the real state of the world, and the evaluation and of the present phenomena and streams of literature based on the autonomous procession and sophisticated arrangement of the seriously collected store of learning."[29] The journal was not abolished, but it was relaunched in the spring of 1957. Of course, the editorial in the April issue was not written by Lukács, who was being held in Snagov as a member of the Imre Nagy group, but by László Kardos, the leader of the Department of World Literature at University of Budapest. However, the program remained unaltered: "The literature that secludes itself from the inspirations, lessons, and experience of the brotherly beauty of contemporary world literature is threatened by the danger of withering,

26 Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv 1954–1960.

27 "Amerikai filmek a mozikban?," *Magyar Ifjúság*, January 19, 1957.

28 Information on Hungarian–American film relations between 1957 and 1964 (August 5, 1964). MNL OL XIX-I-22 90. d.

29 György Lukács, "Magyar irodalom – világirodalom," 3–5.

dehumanization, graying, and monotony. Wide-open windows all around are a precondition of the real development of our national culture."[30]

At the same time, the programs of the theaters were similar to those of the cinemas. The spring program had already been decided before the revolution. The new performances continued the de-Stalinization line. Soviet plays were not performed. Theaters were just as eager as cinemas to avoid sparking public protests. In the spring of 1957, *Népszabadság* summarized the mentality of the months after the suppression of the revolution as the negative culmination of the process started in 1953: "slowly they 'adjusted' the 'old, good, certain-success' operettas, appealing classics, and in the best case new Hungarian slapstick comedies, which are evasive in content and low-grade in performance." After November, "the shudder from the messages (even progressive bourgeois messages!) and the service of philistine illusions and lies" were palpable.[31]

The tendencies were similar in theaters and cinemas: Soviet plays disappeared, earlier Hungarian "blockbusters," classical plays, and several Western light comedies appeared. József Révai, the ideologist in charge of cultural affairs during the Rákosi era in his notorious March article attacked "ideological clarity" in theater life through a revival of the plays of Ferenc Molnár and Ferenc Herczeg.[32]

What was playing in the theaters on that day? In addition to three classical plays (Victor Hugo: *Ruy Blas*; G. B. Shaw: *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *You Can Never Tell*), there were also two post-World War I Italian comedies: one by Dario Niccodemi and Pirandello's unconventional *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. The latter was premiered in 1957. According to a critic writing for *Nők Lapja*, an illustrated weekly, the director highlighted Pirandello's playfulness and subdued his philosophical turbidity.[33] Four of the remaining five productions were operettas: three Hungarian plays (*Nuptials of Ipafa*; *Legend of Tabán*; *Graf of Luxembourg*) and one Austrian play (Benatzky: *The King with the Umbrella)*. The fifth was *Olympia* by Ferenc Molnár. So the offer was restricted to comedies and light musical performances, complemented with two operas (Bánk bán, Don Juan). László Németh's *Galilei* and two social critical comedies (a contemporary French satire in crime-story form by Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon and a Yugoslav

30 László Kardos, "Vihar után," 3–4.

31 László Kálmán, "Megjegyzések a vidéki színházak műsortervéhez," *Népszabadság*, September 3, 1957.

32 József Révai, "Eszmei tisztaságot!," *Népszabadság*, March 7, 1957.

33 Béla Mátrai-Betegh, "Hat szerep keres egy szerzőt," *Nők Lapja*, January 31, 1957.

comedy by Branislav Nušić), which were first performed before the revolution, had been cancelled since January.

According to a March 15 article in *Élet és Irodalom* demanding order in culture, the situation at the houses of culture was even worse:

> In the Young Guard Cultural Home *One Kiss and Nothing Else* is played. Danuvia Cultural Home plays the comedy by László Fodor. The István Pataki House of Culture plays *The Moonlight Groom*. MOM House of Culture plays *Let's Dance Mambo*, the Zsigmond Móricz House of Culture plays *Drum Duel* and *Rock and Roll*, and the House of Culture of the Duna Shoe Factory played a comedy entitled *Bubus* by Gábor Vaszary.[34]

In the subsequent months the popular French playwright, Jean Anouilh, also known in Hungary between 1945 and 1948, returned to the stage with *Eurydice* and *Rendezvous in Senlis*, along with other entertaining plays, such as Dario Niccodemi's *Morning, Noon and Night*, which the reviewer of *Népszabadság* found a "real Italian orange juice, does not bemuse, does not intoxicate, does not have strength or alcoholic content, but is bland and refreshing."[35]

In the case of theaters, there was no such central body as for film import decisions: theaters as creative workshops composed their own yearly plans and submitted them to the Ministry of Culture. Of course, they paid regard to proportions, and the necessity of including an appropriate number of contemporary Hungarian, Soviet, socialist, and classical plays in their programs. These program plans were discussed by the leaders of the Ministry of Culture in the second half of 1957, and plays were accepted which later caused the biggest problems. However, the conference emphasized that the number of Soviet and socialist plays should be raised and propagated more intensely (Vsevolod Vishnevsky's *Optimist Tragedy* was the core drama in that year), and plans were also made to cut back the number of "products of low-level bourgeois literature." They also criticized theaters for trying to win over audiences by compromising principles: "theater directors in the capital have been fighting for a recent Western play for weeks." Nevertheless, after the revolution theaters could not help offering numerous foreign plays: most of the writers did not write, so there

34 Kálmán Sándor, "Üzleti siker – Irodalmi szabadság – Kultúrpolitika," *Élet és Irodalom,* March 15, 1957.

35 "Színházi esték," *Népszabadság*, February 13, 1957.

were not enough new contemporary Hungarian plays. The theater with the worst proportion offered 11 premiers of which only 2 were Hungarian. [36]

In 1957, the inclusion of earlier discredited leftist authors was continued with Frederico Garcia Lorca. In April, the National Theater in Budapest showed *Blood Wedding*, in the autumn the National Theater of Miskolc opted for *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Several theaters included *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck and *Before Sunset* by Gerhart Hauptmann. The Attila József Theater selected an Italian play by Gian Paolo Callegari (*The Girls Who Burned out Early*), which reflected on the so called Montesi-scandal. Some other plays added to the Western socially critical pieces (*The Little Foxes* by Lilian Hellmann and *The Diary of Anne Frank*), while *Naples Millionaire* by Eduardo di Filippo and a comedy by Victorien Sardou represented the lighter line.

The two problematic plays might have passed as critical plays by Western authors, one targeting the circumstances in capitalist society and the other slamming the American occupation of Japan. As reviews make clear, the cultural watchdogs only attacked these plays after they had been brought to the stage. *The Egg* by Félicien Marceau was heralded as a drama unveiling the lies of "bourgeois society," in which one must sacrifice all moral values in order to prosper.[37] However, cultural policy makers and critics soon realized that it represented Existentialism, which was only tolerated in very small doses after 1953.[38] Later criticism tried to insist that the drama was harmful since it allegedly propagated nihilism and cynicism, and the way it typified "petty bourgeois points

36 László Kálmán, "Megjegyzések a vidéki színházak műsortervéhez," *Népszabadság*, September 3, 1957.

37 "Egy héttel »A tojás« bemutatója előtt," *Magyar Nemzet*, October 30, 1957.

38 Jean-Paul Sartre was accepted in the Soviet bloc first on a political basis and only afterwards as artist, and hardly at all as an ideologue. Sartre supported peaceful coexistence and visited Moscow in 1954. In January 1956, his play *Nekrassov*, a satire of the anti-communist hysteria of the West, was also shown in the József Katona Theater. György Kemény, "J. P. Sartre: Főbelövendők klubja," *Szabad Nép*, February 15 1956. However, the following reminiscence tells of the variety of responses: "June 27, 1956, József Katona Theater, Sartre: Nekrassov, the moment of the first act caused earthquake in the theater. The swindler who climbed into the flat of the communist journalist through the window escaping from the police is trying to explain the weird situation: Violetta Ferrari is interestedly listening to Zoltán Várkonyi and gives cool-headed, clever, surprising and confusing answers. And then the wizard-of-words swindler loses his temper and cries out: 'You are a bitch!' In 1956, in Hungary a bad-egg phony calls the communist journalist a bitch. Scandal! After these words, the ceiling almost foundered in the downtown theater [...] Some people's delicate palate was hurt by something rude having been said publicly, some were appalled by the fact that a communist journalist had been called a bitch... And many thought: at last somebody aired it..." Gábor Szigethy, "Vilcsi."

of views" as characteristic of all mankind and gave up hope for change was not acceptable.[39] As a critic writing for *Népszabadság* contended,

> [t]his writer's approach does not know humanity, benignity, or moral sense, he does not believe in anything anymore. Its ideal is the perspective of a wood louse, where nothing but instincts remain, you do not have to care for anything, you must not think... This is the denial of everything that is human, this is animal life, it reveals the last moments of a culture. That is why this anti-human art is unacceptable to us, even if it draws a harsh picture of the gray petty bourgeois soul and offers several well-crafted characters. It is unacceptable because it reflects the anarchist worldview against which we are fighting a hard, passionate, and enduring struggle.[40]

Theater critic Ferenc Gy. Simon directly blamed the actors and actresses for elevating such an equivocal play by doing an outstanding performance with great enthusiasm.[41]

The other play in the crossfire was an American one depicting life in occupied Japan after 1945 with a sense of irony. Some theater experts thought it was appropriate,[42] but partisan critics found *The Teahouse of the August Moon* too "back-slapping." Indeed, in their contention it is embodied the propagation of the American occupation: "the holder of the Pulitzer Prize and the voluntary PR-manager of the US Army makes very tricky propaganda about the humanitarian goodness of the occupying army of imperialism."[43]

Book publishing was similar in its practices and the shifts it underwent. The medium-term plans of workshops were accepted by a central body. One can observe the rise of commercial culture here, too, i.e. the influence of considerations of profitability and public demand. However, the plans were compiled in a situation of unrest, and the Ministry of Culture could only discuss

39 János Komlós, "A tojás," *Magyar Nemzet*, November 14, 1957: Gábor Antal, "Néhány megjegyzés a Nemzeti Színház új évadjáról," *Magyar Nemzet*, November 17, 1957.

40 Kemény, "A tojás."

41 Ferenc Simon Gy., "A színpad virágai," *Magyar Ifjúság*, December 13, 1957.

42 "And if we accepted this play as a witty comedy, we should be happy—and lately there have been such occasions more and more frequently—that we could get to know an interesting theater play from the West again." István Gábor, "Teaház az augusztusi Holdhoz," *Magyar Nemzet*, October 26, 1957.

43 Ferenc Simon Gy., "A színpad virágai."

the quarterly plans of the publishing houses as of the second half of 1957.[44] It was too late, however, to make significant changes. The plans of Európa Kiadó, the publishing house with the profile of world literature, had 28 foreign operas for the third quarter of 1957: six Soviet, eight "socialist," and fourteen "Western" works. The five volumes of "contemporary" "people's democratic" literature included Franz Kafka and Bertold Brecht. However, the Ministry intervened in the first case. Kafka only began to become acceptable to the cultural organs of the regime in the mid-1960s, as was signaled by a Kafka-study and the publication of one of his novels.[45] The long-time "exiled" Brecht was permitted to return with the *Threepenny novel*, and in April *The Good Person of Szechwan* was staged in the József Katona Theater,[46] followed by further Brecht plays in 1958. Among the fourteen Western authors, six were contemporary. The Hungarian audience may well have remembered Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz, W. Somerset Maugham, and Jean Cocteau from before 1948, while novels by the Indian Mulk Raj Anand had been published under Rákosi, too. The first Hungarian translation by Alberto Moravia (*The Roman Stories*) was published in 1957, but the real sensation was the publication of the novel by *Françoise* Sagan. Her first novel, *Hello Sadness*, was a strange composition even in the French cultural landscape at the time, so its Hungarian publication was really surprising, though Polish audiences had been able to read it since 1956. Nevertheless, it had become common practice by then for publishers to bring out works from the West that were questionable according to the ideology of the regime, although these works were only available to small readership because of issues of circulation. Sagan, who introduced her readers to the world of rebel teenagers, was usually labelled an existentialist, but her book was much better received than the two abovementioned plays. Its novelty, strange honesty, and credible reportage could be emphasized, and this constituted an advantage. It could be characterized as a presentation of "the whole disturbing and mysterious field, about which we only know the outbursts: from rock and roll to the matricides, patricides, and infanticides committed out of boredom".[47] However, the publication of Sagan was not the general rule, but rather the exception, a kind of peculiarity which was much desired by the intellectuals to satisfy rather than whet the appetite. As László Kardos put it

44 Report on the July 16 1957 session of the conference of deputy ministers. MNL OL M–KS XIX-I-4-eee 1. d.

45 Tibor Szobotka, "Kafka kettős világa," 87–112; Kafka, "*A kastély.*"

46 István Hermann, "Jó embert keresünk," *Élet és Irodalom,* March 29, 1957.

47 P. F., "A "Bonjour tristesse" magyarul," *Magyar Nemzet*, November 22, 1957.

when writing about the treatment of the new phenomena of Western literature in earlier years, "curiosity slowly distorted into actual thirst, and thirst spelled illusions about value for the thirsty which were not proportional to the real values of Western literature."[48]

The Return of Banned Genres

Official cultural policy made its first timid steps toward the acceptance of jazz after Stalin's death. This tendency continued after 1956, although it did not lead to the support of "decent" jazz smoothly. Jazz and other practically banned forms, genres, and products of Western culture were regarded as destructive and decadent. As a consequence of the anti-jazz campaign, which began as early as 1946 in the Soviet Union, many jazz musicians were sent to labor camps. Jazz was condemned as a tool of dehumanization, the very opposite of a form of art that was culturally valuable, and even a weapon of American imperialism, since it allegedly killed human feelings and thoughts therefore turned the individual into a cog-wheel of American war machinery. In Hungary, popular jazz melodies did not entirely disappear. Some of them were still played at bars. A circular letter of the Union of Working Youth (Dolgozó Ifjúság Szövetsége, or DISZ) proves that even the communist youth organization had to make concessions to the interests of youngsters: some American songs ("In the Mood," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo") were even accepted in DISZ clubs.[49]

The shift in jazz policy in the Soviet bloc began in 1953. Jazz was also included in radio programs, and more and more jazz hits were played in bars and clubs. New ideological explanations were given: the roots of the genre allegedly were found in folk music, jazz was understood as the music of the American black population, so it was the music of the oppressed.[50] Jazz of course remained part of the cultural palate after 1956. The magazine *Rádióújság* recommended the music of the American Gerry Mulligan sextet for listeners who "had been denied the opportunity to form their own opinions," and it criticized the earlier "narrow-minded" and "hard-shell" cultural policy.[51] However, jazz had deeper roots—and larger audiences—in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Jazz bands from these two countries took part in some of the biggest jazz concerts of 1957, too. In July,

48 László Kardos, "Nyugati könyvek," *Magyar Nemzet*, December 25, 1957.

49 Ryback, *Rock around the Block*, 11–13.

50 "A modern jazz mesterei," *Rádióújság*, January 7, 1957.

51 "Az amerikai néger Hot Shots együttes Magyarországon," *Népszabadság*, January 18, 1958.

Polish Hot Jazz performed in Budapest, followed by the Karel Vlach Orchestra from Prague in September and the American Hot Shots in January 1958.[52]

When *Népszabadság* emphasized that Elisabeth Charles, the Scottish singer of Hot Jazz, was an extraordinary example of "true jazz singing without unnecessary writhing or false, external tools," it targeted some spontaneous tendencies in Budapest bars. A phenomenon that the Metropolitan Council had already detected between 1953 and 1955 began to return to the places of entertainment: "The bands, seeing the lack of orientation, thought everything is possible, and they can smuggle American songs into their shows without any restriction. Moreover, they tried to score and perform the Hungarian songs in Western styles."[53] "Wildings," as this performance style was called, also appeared after 1956, although cultural policy demanded an aesthetic jazz style without wild improvisation. The embrace of official jazz was set back by the events of the international jazz festival in Budapest in the summer of 1958, when some of the groups and members of the audience did a "dervish St. Vitus's dance': "some of the youngsters in the hall forgot themselves, and forgot about their fellows, and they improvised a turbulent, wild fury under the rock and roll music," lamented the party daily, rebuking both the participants and the organizers.[54]

Rock, or as it was often called beat, was only fostered by the Hungarian Young Communist League (Magyar Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség, KISZ) around 1964, after a comprehensive survey on youth pastimes. From this point on, efforts were made to shepherd the "guitar bands" within the walls of KISZ clubs and houses of culture. However, 1956/57 was still a time of reluctance, even in the West. In addition to generational conflicts, this reluctance was nourished by the century-long opposition of highbrow and lowbrow culture,[55] and also the averseness of European elites to Americanization.[56] Nonetheless, in Western Europe Bill Haley's and Elvis Presley's music made its way through, while cultural mass production quickly exploited the new craze in the pursuit of its material interests. Expresso Bongo, a 1958 musical by Wolf Mankowitz (which was also performed in Hungary

52 B. T., "Lengyel esztrádegyüttes Budapesten," *Népszabadság*, July 5, 1957; Péter Molnár G., "Sokkal igényesebben!," *Népszabadság*, July 25, 1957.

53 Report of the Cultural Department of the Metropolitan Council on public entertainment (September 9, 1954) BFL XXIII. 114. 16. kisdoboz.

54 "Utószó a jazz-»fesztiválhoz«," *Népszabadság*, July 27, 1958.

55 Western European—mostly state-run—radios were also unwilling to play rock. Change was enforced by pirate radios in the mid-1960s, while in socialist countries music programs of RFE and Luxembourg Radio had similar effects. Brugge, "Swinging Sixties made in Czechoslovakia," 143–55.

56 Poiger, "Rock 'n' Roll, Female Sexuality and the Cold War Battle over German Identities," 579–83.

in 1963), showed this process from a critical perspective, though it was in fact a successful part of the same music industry at the time.

At the level of official cultural policy, in the mid-1950s the typical attitude toward rock and roll music was rigid rejection, so it was rather surprising that rock and roll was mentioned in a relatively gentle, almost positive context after November 1956. In January 1957, Hungarian journalists started to introduce the greatest Western stars to the Hungarian public, and they left behind the usual pejorative insinuations. József Vető's report from Vienna described the so-called "Halbstarke" (rock hooligans) almost as waggish music fans, who were called "jampec" in Hungary, which meant a kind of swaggering dandy. Vető emphasized the irresistible ancient power of the music, a notion that would only return in the second half of the 1960s: "Even if I do think hard, I cannot remember a tune, one cannot memorize even a tune from this music, but one still feels saturated with it, and one feels that one must follow the astoundingly inflammatory rhythm."[57] He even wrote appreciatively of how the Austrian audience of the Bill Haley film *Rock Around the Clock* had stomped, clapped, whistled, and stood up to dance in the projection room. After the film, he was not looking for broken shop windows, but rather noticed that "cheerfulness rings through the neighborhood around the cinema, hundreds, even thousands of people came out dancing in the streets."[58] *Magyar Ifjúság* also described rock and roll as "thrilling" music in its portrait of Elvis Presley. However, the article downgraded the music of the American idol. The author was rather sympathetic with the enthusiastic youth, and he reminded members of the older generations that they had had their own craze, which also had been intolerable as far as their parents had been concerned.[59] Moreover, the rhythms of Elvis also could be heard on the radio thanks to the journalist Kitty Havas, who did reports during the New York trip of the Hungarian UN-delegation and purchased some trendy records, among them Elvis and Harry Belafonte, to be broadcast over the Hungarian Radio in June.[60]

In addition to popular music, genres of the visual arts that had long disappeared from public spaces were also revived. In the spring of 1957, the lovers of fine arts (some 71,000 people),[61] could enjoy a peculiar experience.

57 József Vető, "Fékevesztetten: Két viharos óra egy bécsi moziban," *Népszabadság*, February 21, 1957.

58 Ibid.

59 "Őrület a huszadik hatványon," *Magyar Ifjúság*, February 2, 1957.

60 "New York-i riport," *Rádióújság*, June 9, 1957.

61 According to the records of the host institution Műcsarnok. Accessed: September 6, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/mucsarnokidogep/photos/a.603456473069603.1073741828.603442449737672/640994929315757/?type=1&theater.

After eight years, works of abstract art were displayed again in an exhibition called the Spring Salon. Officially it was not organized by the ministry, and four juries of artists made selections from the materials that had been submitted. One of the juries was assigned to assess abstract works by artists led by Dezső Korniss, who had been expelled from the university in 1948 and had worked with little hope of ever having any public exposure until 1956. A separate room was arranged for abstract pieces, among them *Miska*, a painting by Korniss. It depicted a Hungarian peasant constructed out of geometric shapes. It was not a non-figurative painting in the narrow sense, much like those of Picasso, but the vision of the half and full oval and round plane figures was met with such aversion that Péter Rényi, deputy editor-in-chief at *Népszabadság* could quote disparaging remarks from the guest book: "If artistic freedom means Miska and co., then Révai was right."[62]

Most critics welcomed the initiative, but did not argue in favor of the equality of abstract or "naturalist" styles. Rather, they espoused the idea also prevalent in other cultural spheres like literature and book publishing, according to which any denial of exposure to the public will only lead to overvaluation of undesirable tendencies.

However, even those who were receptive to the exhibition and its aims could not help noticing that politics—and "socialist realism"—had almost disappeared. Anna Oelmacher wrote on behalf of those criticizing the government from the left in *Élet és Irodalom*. This group held the plethora of neutral topics and the absolute lack of political commitment as the greatest problem. But from Oelmacher's view, it was seen as anti-socialism, revisionism, and conscious resistance. "The Spring Salon is a manifestation of petty bourgeois revisionism in the fine arts. [It is an expression of] anarchist freedom that claims independence from the foundations and motion of society."[63]

She also played the "national card," underscoring that deniers of forced Sovietization were adopting foreign (Western) patterns: "But today people claim to be modern who operate with esoteric shapes. And people who kept inciting against Soviet patterns, why have not they turned to our lively and still vibrant traditions, and why make our 'most modern' ones outworn Bauhaus art, French surrealism, Dutch constructivism, etc.?" The author representing the platform of Révai jumped to general conclusions from the return of "withered

62 Péter Rényi, "Személyes megjegyzések a Tavaszi Tárlatról," *Népszabadság*, May 5, 1957.

63 Oelmacher Anna, "Forradalmi tett vagy kispolgári revizionizmus?," *Élet és Irodalom,* April 5, 1957.

streams": the call for freedom in art is the denial of party control and socialist cultural policy. In this debate, both sides often referred to the Hundred Flowers Campaign of Mao Zedong, launched in May 1956. It could serve as an argument for openness; it was the idea behind the decisions of the four juries of the Spring Salon, which embraced the idea of separate salons for different streams. And this was the formula used by the leftist equation of artistic freedom with libertinage, denial of party control as an outcry against resistance and revisionism. In their metaphors, they referred to gardens instead of meadows of wildflowers: "Let it be ten or twenty salons, flowers would grow wild without a careful gardener."[64] Or as Károly Kiss, secretary of the Central Committee of the HSWP put it in the parliament: "Now they say we should let all flowers bloom and all birds sing, following the example of our Chinese comrades. Our party agrees with the Chinese comrades that all nice, useful, and odorous flowers can bloom, except for poppy flowers. And our party is supportive if all songbirds with a good voice sing, but harmony demands the silencing of 'good-birds.'"[65] Journalist and former minister of information Ernő Mihályfi, summarizing the debate in É*let és Irodalom*, suggested that the policies that might be appropriate in Chinese environment were not applicable in post-(counter)revolutionary Hungary, because the Spring Salon had dredged up streams of thought and art that had already been transcended: "So it is not about deciding the future of newly emerging streams and styles, but tested and well-known old weeds had come to light."[66]

However, the standpoint of the government remained unclear for contemporary actors. The hardline supporters of the government would have expected greater severity and ideological consistency. However, the cultural policy of the post-1956 communist government directed by György Aczél opted for a more open cultural life and the continuation of the de-Stalinization policies in culture. Paradoxically, the goal of this cultural opening up was to reestablish and strengthen the party's authority and position in cultural life. This complicated situation provided the background for the relaunch of the monthly literary journal *Nagyvilág* which mediated contemporary Western high culture, as well as for the successful negotiations with Hollywood and the approval of Spring Salon, the forum in which contemporary Western-influenced works of

64 Ibid.

65 Károly Kiss's speech in the Parliament on May 10, 1957. Országgyűlési napló, 1953. II. kötet (1956. július 30. – 1958. szeptember 26.), 1706.

66 Ernő Mihályfi, "Jegyzetek a vita-tárlatról," *Élet és Irodalom,* April 19, 1957.

the fine arts were exhibited. In this regard, even official cultural policy tried to represent itself as resistance to the former Stalinist practices. Promoting the transfer of Western culture could be understood as a defense of the de-Stalinization process in culture.

Decision makers on the intermediary levels (at editorial boards, theater offices, organizing committees etc.) found themselves in a situation in which they could try to shape the cultural processes in Hungary. Their contributions were inevitable in the selection, promotion, and publishing of works of Western arts and culture. However, while on the one hand accepting one of these roles after November 1956 was tantamount to an acknowledgement of the Kádár government, on the other hand the people who were in these positions were able to work to ensure the survival of the de-Stalinization tendency and the preservation of some degree of openness. This was important, since it was not clear at all whether or not the Kádár regime would (be able to) continue in this direction. Many of them were against a re-Stalinization process in culture and resisted a supposed move away from the result of de-Stalinization. In other words, they worked against attempts by the regime to slow the relatively still narrow process of cultural openness.

In this mix-up, earlier displaced and allegedly "transcended" contents returned, both from the "bourgeois past" of national culture and the "bourgeois present" of the West. In this regard, Western culture, which was to some extent readmitted after 1953 and then not rejected by the Kádár government, could serve a different role from the place it had been given as a subservient form of culture in the controlled de-Stalinization process. What was received from Western culture was far from being entirely "progressive." Re-opened channels of transfer created a situation in which some kinds of counterculture could be nourished. This counterculture included ideological and artistic streams alien to Marxism, such as existentialism and abstract art, as well as the spread of popular mass culture.

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Unspectacular Destalinization: The Case of Slovak Writers after 1956

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On the basis of archival sources, in this essay I examine the debates that took place among Slovak writers in the spring of 1956 and afterwards. I focus on the clashes between the Union of Slovak Writers and the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) that began at the time, and also on the internal discussions among the pro-Communist intellectuals concerning the interpretation of de-Stalinization process. The CPCz leadership essentially brought an end to the "political discussion" which temporarily had been allowed during the "thaw" following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Research shows that the relatively weak persecutions allowed the gradual development of reformist thinking and the pluralization of the literary life in Slovakia in the second half of the 1950s and, later, in the 1960s. The political clashes between writers and Communist Party took place in both parts of Czechoslovakia in different ways.

Keywords: de-Stalinization; Union of Czechoslovak Writers, Union of Slovak Writers, liberalization, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Communist Party of Slovakia

Introduction

On the eve of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the process of reconstructing the communist regime in Czechoslovakia after the crisis in 1953 had come to an end, both in terms of the establishment of a new balance of power within the narrow leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and in terms of setting the political and socio-economic priorities of the communist power. In this essay, I examine the cultural ferment in Slovakia in the spring of 1956 and its aftermath. I focus in particular on the attempts of Slovak writers, mainly those who were members or supporters of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, to liberalize ideological control over literature, which included censorship in practice and an insistence on the principles of so-called Socialist Realism. My aim is to discuss the extent to which the rebellion on the part of the Slovak writers was a predominantly autonomous process in the context of the community of writers in Czechoslovakia. I will also seek an answer to the question as to why Slovak intellectuals, who were

struggling for the liberalization of the regime, were not able to exert stronger influence on Slovak society.

The Early Phase of Criticism

In Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, the process of the gradual "de-canonization" of so-called Socialist Realism as an obligatory and exclusively allowed style of art had begun before 1956. In 1954, literary texts began to appear disputing the heroic pathos of the "construction of Socialism," abandoning "Manichean worldviews" and didactic approaches, and seeking to "inform, inculcate, and inspire"[1] readers. The return to individual reflections and emotions, instead of the officially required glorification of the official ideology and policies, was significant for the novel *Sklený vrch* [The glass hill] by Slovak writer Alfonz Bednár[2] and the book of poetry by Ivan Kupec entitled *Nížinami výšinami* [Through the lowlands, through the uplands].[3] However, the first open argument broke out at the end of 1955, when Kupec and novelist Dominik Tatarka (a man who, in 1948–55, had been an active supporter of Socialist Realism and Stalinism) started to criticize the official concept of art and literature openly. Kupec,[4] together with Ján Brezina and other poets, sought the separation of art from political propaganda.

The issue of the autonomy of culture and, in particular, literature from state control was openly raised by Tatarka, when he criticized the novel *Drevená dedina* [Wooden village][5] by František Hečko, which at that time was considered the most outstanding Slovak "socialist" novel and was praised by the state propaganda. According to Tatarka, the novel was an example of "artificial, scholastic literature."[6] Tatarka criticized the growing role of the apparatus of the Union of Slovak Writers, and he claimed to create literary groups outside the structures of the Union, i.e. he claimed to seek to change the mission of the Union as a tool that was used to exert control over writers to further the Party' s ideological control over literature. His article met with a negative reaction. Novelist Vladimír Mináč accused Tatarka and Kupec of having made "attempts

1 Shore, "Engineering in the Age of Innocence," 399, 407.
2 Bednár, *Sklený vrch.*
3 Kupec, *Nížinami výšinami.*
4 Kupec, "Na obranu poézie," 4–5.
5 Hečko, *Drevená dedina.*
6 Tatarka, "Slovo k súčasníkom o literatúre," 6–7.

to reconcile idealist esthetics with the esthetics of dialectic materialism."[7] Hečko, the author of the novel that Tatarka and Kupec had criticized, merged the ideological and political arguments in order to stifle Tatarka. According to him, both Kupec and Tatarka were ready to "sell all our socialism for a cherrystone."[8] No restrictive measures were taken against Tatarka or Kupec, which would have been unimaginable in the first half of the decade. But during the first months of 1956, the discussion in the weekly *Kultúrny život* [Cultural life][9] continued. Subsequently, Tatarka criticized not only the abovementioned novel "Wooden Village" as a "tragic mistake of the Slovak literature," but also the entire official concept of literature, which according to him was "non-realistic, non-scientific, [and] misleading." He raised the following questions: "[does] our contemporary [literature] express the truth of our life and the feeling of our life? [Does it express our feelings as people] who went through World War II, [and] who fight against the next war?"[10] In his reports, which were published after he had taken trips in Western Europe, he stated, "we don't want the division of the world, which was invented by the enemy."[11] This statement prompted a negative response on the part of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia (CPS) Karol Bacílek.[12] The dispute between Tatarka on the one hand and Mináč and Hečko on the other is an example of the "differentiation of the political languages of Marxism."[13] However, it began before the 20th Congress of the CPSU. In fact, Tatarka disavowed one of the key aims of Socialist Realism when he stressed that he never wanted to "construct a new type of human."[14]

The pace of discussions in *Kultúrny život* accelerated after the 20th Congress of CPSU, as the condemnation of Joseph Stalin by the first secretary of the Soviet Communists Nikita Khrushchev caused an "essential crisis of identity," in particular among members of the younger generation of the communist intelligentsia.[15] Former CPS official and writer Juraj Špitzer, referring to the Polish

7 Mináč, "Kríza kritérií," 6–7.

8 Hečko, "To je to, v čom sa rozchádzame," 6.

9 *Kultúrny život* – weekly newspaper issued by the Union of Slovak Writers.

10 Tatarka, "Diskusný príspevok Dominika Tatarku," 4.

11 Ibid.

12 Slovak National Archive (SNA), A ÚV KSS [Archive of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Slovakia], f. [fond] PÚV KSS [Presidium of Central Committee of CPS], kr. [box] 931, Zasadnutie BÚV KSS October 18,. 1956. Niektoré ideologické problémy práce strany na Slovensku.

13 Kopeček, *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce*, 114.

14 Matejovič, *Vladimír Mináč a podoby literárneho diskurzu druhej polovice 20. storočia,* 280.

15 Kopeček, *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce*, 114.

literary scientist Stefan Żółkiewski, made the following contention: "discussion of art is political discussion… discussion of the all of life, all social issues, the direction of their development."[16] In opposition to the Secretary of the Union of Slovak Writers Ctibor Štítnický, Špitzer tried to publish texts by authors who had been the main representatives of Slovak literature before World War II, but these writings had been put on the "black list" since the Communist coup in February 1948 (works by authors such as Milo Urban, Emil Boleslav Lukáč, Ján Smrek, and Valentín Beniak). Špitzer called for a rehabilitation of Slovak surrealist (so-called "nadrealizmus") poetry.[17] Literary scientist Branislav Choma criticized the prevailing understanding of socialism as "too politicized, narrow, and inhumanly egoistic." According to him, socialism had to be a "path to greater humanity, greater freedom, and a life that is actually nicer."[18] On the other hand, only two staunchly Social Realist poets, Andrej Plávka and Milan Lajčiak, openly defended the official cultural policy of the regime. According to Lajčiak, the discussion had to be stopped because it was becoming a "crossroad." According to him, the freedom of writing was the freedom to write in an irresponsible manner.[19] However, until April 1956, the discussion in *Kultúrny život* was focused on the issues strictly connected with the literature, and it did not affect the broader political and socio-economic context.

The 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Writers and its Aftermath

The open conflict with the power center emerged during the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Writers (April 22–29, 1956). *Kultúrny život* adopted a pro-reform stance before reforms had even begun, and it declared its open support for Tatarka and his criticism of *Drevená dedina*. More and more articles were printed focusing on intellectual life in Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, i.e. in the Soviet bloc countries in which people enjoyed a larger degree of freedom of speech. Initially, the leadership of the CPCz was anxious about the congress of writers, and it even considered postponing it, because party leaders expected that critics would begin to find a voice. The congress took place in the spring of 1956, when the "discussion" within the CPCz raised by the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the process of de-Stalinization reached its peak. About 425

16 "Treba posilniť podiel tvorcov pri formovaní nášho života," 3.

17 Štítnický, "Za úspech II. Sjazdu čs. Spisovateľov, za ďalší rozkvet slovenskej literatúry," 3–4.

18 Choma, "Literatúra a naša doba," 4.

19 Lajčiak, "Diskusný príspevok Milana Lajčiaka," 6.

basic Party organizations in Czechoslovakia demanded the convocation of an extraordinary Party congress, which would threaten the positions of the CPCz leadership. Among the Slovak writers, Stalinist methods were criticized mainly by Tatarka, Mináč, Ladislav Mňačko and Kupec. On the other hand, the CPCz party leadership appreciated the statements of Hečko and Štítnický, because they defended the "party-spirit of literature against the manifestations of liberalism."[20]

During the congress, the most famous speeches were held by two Czech poets: Jaroslav Seifert and František Hrubín. Seifert proposed demanding the release of all imprisoned writers and inviting all silenced authors to cooperate.[21] Hrubín required the independence of art from ideology.[22] However, the Slovak writers were actively involved in the congress as well. The novelist Katarína Lazarová criticized the practices of the censors, although people were officially forbidden to speak about the existence of the main authority of press control.[23] She said: "We were in the service of evil headlong. We simply believed that we served the people in the best way."[24] The Congress condemned "any authoritarian solution of the issues of creativity." However, the statement according to which the processes which had begun at the 20th Congress of CPSU had been the "beginning of the new revolutionary process in our life" were not included in the congress' final resolution.[25] Nevertheless, the Congress, together with the protests led by university students (mainly in Prague and Bratislava), was the first open confrontation between the Communist power and society after the 20th Congress of CPSU. All speeches held at the congress were published in the extraordinary issues of the writers' weekly newspaper *Literární noviny* [Literary newspaper] in Czech lands and *Kultúrny život* in Slovakia. At the same time, *Démon súhlasu* [Demon of agreement] by Tatarka was published in *Kultúrny život* in serial form.[26] His prose belongs to the works of alignment with the period of Stalinism

20 National Archive in Prague (NA), A ÚV KSČ [Archive of Central Committee of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia], fond (f.) 02/2 – Presidium of Central Committee of CPCz, box (sv.) 88, archival unit (a. j.) 106, point (bod)3.

21 Seifert, "Z diskusie na II. sjazde československých spisovateľov," 3.

22 II. sjezd Svazu československých spisovatelů 22–29. 4. 1956, vol. I. (protokol), 243–49.

23 The official name of this institution in Slovak is Hlavná správa tlačového dozoru (HSTD). The name of its Slovak branch was Authority of Press Control (Správa tlačového dozoru, STD).

24 Lazarová, "Z diskusie na II. sjazde československých spisovateľov," 3–4.

25 Archive of the Association of the Organizations of Writers of Slovakia (Archív Asociácie organizácií spisovateľov Slovenska), fond (f.) II. zjazd Zväzu československých spisovateľov, box (kr.) B/1.

26 Tatarka, "Démon súhlasu," 15, 16, 17.

in Central and Eastern Europe, like the prosaic works by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Dudintsev in Russia, and Jerzy Andrzejewski, Kazimierz Brandys, and Adam Ważyk in Poland. The main message of the prose is a call for a return to human individuality and a thorough deconstruction of the mechanisms of hypocrisy among the people, who "lost their personality"[27] in the period of Stalinism.

The first reactions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of CPCz to the Congress, which was discussed during the session on April 25, 1956, were negative. According to the Bureau, the congress had become a "palace revolution against the Party leadership." But they were mostly concerned with the speeches that had been held by Czech writers. Subsequently, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPCz discussed the work and results of writer´s congress on May 21, 1956. According to Jiří Hendrych, the Party Secretary responsible for ideological affairs, "most of the writers remained unconvinced, and they oscillated." He stressed the expression of "wrong opinions" and "hostile invectives." According to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPCz, the congress became an "extraordinary valuable… big political verification of our writers." Among the Slovak writers, only Mináč and Lazarová won recognition. Hela Volanská was characterized in a negative way.[28]

The position of the pro-reform intellectuals within the Union of Slovak Writers was strengthened after its Plenary Session on June 1, 1956. The first secretary of the Slovak branch of the Union, Štítnický, who supported the official politics of the CPCz, suddenly adopted the pro-reform stance after the Congress. In his speech, he demanded the rehabilitation of the Slovak communist intellectuals who were associated with *DAV,* a left-leaning journal published between 1924 and 1937. At the beginning of the 1950s, they were accused of being "Slovak bourgeois nationalists," and they were even sentenced in the political trials in 1954. Štítnický condemned censorship.[29] Tatarka demanded the ideological differentiation of the literary journals.[30] The result of the plenary session was the appointment of Špitzer as the new editor-in-chief of *Kultúrny život.* At the time, Špitzer gave voice to criticism of the Stalinist cultural policy, and he advocated a principle of plurality of views published in the journal,

27 Bátorová, *Dominik Tatarka: Slovenský Don Quijote*, 107.

28 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 123, zasadnutie BÚV KSS April 25, 1956. Hodnotenie II. zjazdu československých spisovateľov.

29 Štítnický, "Úlohy slovenských spisovateľov po II. sjazde československých spisovateľov," 1, 3–4.

30 Tatarka, "Malé vysvetlenie," 3.

although in 1950–51 he was one of the main promoters of Stalinism in Slovak art, and he actively participated in the Stalinist purges among the writers.[31] The most important outcome of the plenary session was the decision to establish a new literary journal entitled *Mladá tvorba* [Young creation], focusing on the younger generation of writers. Poet and journalist Milan Ferko was appointed as the first editor-in-chief of the new journal.

On May 2, 1956, the Political Bureau of the CPCz, due to the intervention of the Embassy of the USSR in Prague, decided to stop the "discussion," i.e. the short-term liberalization. Already the General Party Conference, which had been held on June 11–15, 1956 instead of the extraordinary congress of the CPCz, condemned any demands for substantial changes of the official course in order to avoid any requirements for personnel changes. Only the "ideological front" had been identified as a crucial point in the struggle against the "class enemy." One of the most sharply criticized members of the Political Bureau of the CPCz, Václav Kopecký, the most emphatic representative of the rigid ideological stance, described the writers' congress as "passionate exaltations in the spirit of pure liberalism." He equated *Literární noviny* with Radio Free Europe, and he appealed to writers "to clarify their attitude to the speeches presented at the congress," i.e. to disavow the congress. Subsequently, he stressed that only the Union of Writers would be held responsible for it.[32] In fact, Kopecký was the first party official who publicly condemned the congress and the student revolts, along with Antonín Zápotocký (who had been serving President of the Czechoslovak Republic since Stalin's death in 1953) and Zdeněk Fierlinger (Speaker of the National Assembly of Czehoslovakia), who attacked the discontented writers immediately during the congress debates. Kopecký held his speech without having consulted with other members of the Party leadership. Therefore, initially, at the first session of the Political Bureau since the General Party Conference on June 30, 1956, he was criticized not only by A. Zápotocký, but also by Antonín Novotný, the First Secretary of CPCz. On the other hand, another member of the Political Bureau, Czechoslovak Minister of Interior Rudolf Barák, backed Kopecký up. Finally, the Czechoslovak Party leadership gave its support to Kopecký.[33]

31 Drug, "Premeny umeleckého života po roku 1948," 32–37.

32 Kopecký, Václav. "Povzniesť na vyššiu úroveň ideologickú prácu celej strany" [Enhance the ideological work of the entire Party to a higher level]. *Pravda,* June 16, 1956, 5–6.

33 NA, AÚV KSČ, f. 02/2, sv. 108, a. j. 126, b. 1.

In the summer and autumn of 1956, *Kultúrny život* published editorials written by the former Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPS (1944) and the President of the Slovak Academy of Sciences Ondrej Pavlík, who criticized the Party policy towards intellectuals and reform of education system in 1953 prepared by the Commissioner for Education and Culture Ernest Sýkora, representative of the hard-liners within the CPS.[34] However, Pavlík was known not only as the author of some of the abovementioned articles indirectly attacking the members of the Slovak Party leadership. Several times, he had expressed his support of the rehabilitation of the communist victims of Stalinist political trials, namely in the case of Gustáv Husák and Ladislav Novomeský, who had been accused of "Slovak bourgeois nationalism" and sentenced in 1954.[35] The resistance of the group of writers connected with *Kultúrny život* would probably have been impossible without close informal contacts with some of the members of Central Committee of the CPS apparatus, such as Ladislav Ťažký (who was also a writer), Ján Komiňár (instructor of the Central Committee of the CPS for literature), and philosopher Ján Uher (assistant to Augustín Michalička), who supported the pro-reform initiatives.[36] Uher was the author of a noticeable article in which he inspired intellectuals to communicate with other social strata.[37] However, the activities of these intellectuals and their informal meetings and discussions were monitored by the state security forces, and the state security officers sent regular information about them to the CPS leadership.

The leadership of the CPS discussed the activities of Slovak writers only in autumn 1956, on the eve of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The report of the state security forces from September 1956 characterized Špitzer as a "saboteur." According to the document, Špitzer and his collaborators "fight consciously, but in a sophisticated way, not only against certain party officials,[38] but against the party leadership in general."[39] Novotný put pressure on Bacílek as well. He participated in the session of the Bureau of CPS on October 18, 1956, at which he stressed the "uneven development of the understanding of results of 20th Congress in Slovakia and in Czech lands." According to him, there had been no

34 "O problémoch a úlohách našej inteligencie," 3.

35 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 945, BÚV March 27, 1957. Stenografický záznam zo zasadnutia komisie ÚV KSS so spisovateľmi.

36 Interview with Ján Uher, by the author of this article.

37 Uher, "Problémy a úlohy našej inteligencie," 9.

38 Karol Bacílek, Augustín Michalička and Ernest Sýkora.

39 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. P. David, kr. 2248, a. j. 320. Poznatky o Jurajovi Špitzerovi a spol. (1956).

open attacks against the party leadership in the Czech lands, but "[they] continue in Slovakia." At the same time, he appealed to the leadership of the CPS to solve the "shortcomings in *Kultúrny život*." Bacílek preferred a successive approach to a frontal attack. He considered removing Špitzer from *Kultúrny život,* strengthening censorship, and organizing a talk with Kupec. If they wouldn't renounce their views, disciplinary measures would be taken. However, Novotný accused Bacílek of adopting a defensive approach. As a consequence of his intervention the report focusing on the ideological issues in Slovakia, which had been prepared by Bacílek, was rejected by the Bureau, which meant the weakening of the position of the First Secretary of the CPS. Subsequently, the so-called "Slovak bourgeois nationalism" was proclaimed the main political threat, and the campaign against it was resumed. Špitzer, according to Bacílek, was the "elder statesman," i.e. an informal leader among the writers. As he said, Kupec was perceived by the CPS leadership as a man with "anti-Marxist" views, together with some other former interwar surrealist poets (Vladimír Reisel, Štefan Žáry, Pavol Bunčák) and novelist Bednár. The alliance of the rebelling intellectuals with some former Communist politicians (Špitzer, Plávka) was perceived by Bacílek and Pavol David as a threat to their power. According to Michalička, the Union of Slovak Writers became a "center of revisionist ideas," and he stressed that not Špitzer, but the Secretary of Union Štítnický was the main source of their inspiration.[40]

Events in Hungary and Poland in October 1956 and the Suppression of the Writers' Resistance

The uprising in Hungary in October 1956 postponed a prepared intervention against the Union of Slovak Writers. Although the so-called "Polish October," i.e. the appointment of the former victim of Stalinist persecutions Władysław Gomułka to the position of First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party and the consequent liberalization of public life, was perceived by the CPCz leadership in a negative way, many Slovak intellectuals sympathized with the changes taking place in Poland. Tough censorship, however, did not allow them to publish any articles opposing the anti-intellectual stance of the CPCz leadership or the speech of Kopecký. Not only Mňačko, but also Mináč were not

40 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 931, BÚV KSS October 18, 1956. Niektoré ideologické problémy práce strany na Slovensku; Kaplan, *Mocní a bezmocní,* 317.

allowed to publish their articles or open letters reacting to Kopecký's speech at the Party Conference in June 1956.[41]

At its session on October 24, 1956, the Party Group within the Union of Slovak Writers did not accept the interpretation of "Polish October" presented by Bacílek. According to its members, the "slowness of democratization, not the democratization itself, caused the events." Špitzer considered preparing a protest against the dissolution of the Union of Hungarian Writers, but poet Ján Kostra, playwright Peter Karvaš, and Štítnický were against such a step.[42] Finally, on October 26, 1956, the leadership of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers decided to condemn the Hungarian uprising "after the intervention of the Party." Even writers who presented critical attitudes towards the official politics of CPCz before October 1956 participated in the discussions with the citizens living in southern Slovakia, organized by the CPS leadership, including Štítnický, Špitzer, Mináč, Ferko, and others. The aim of these discussions was to prevent the anti-communist mobilization of the members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia in support of the Hungarian revolution.[43]

In spite of these intentions, *Kultúrny život* was criticized by the head of the Board of Commissioners Rudolf Strechaj because of the alleged misguidedness of the Hungarian revolution. In November 1956, similar statements were made during the informal meeting of Bacílek, Michalička, and other Party officials with writers at the premises of the Central Committee of the CPS. The criticism of some Czechoslovak writers to the official policy of CPCz didn't mean their support to the Hungarian revolution. Therefore, Mňačko in March 1957 joined the delegation of Czechoslovak writers, together with Bohumil Říha, Jiří Marek (from Czech lands) and Viktor Egri (Hungarian writer from South Slovakia)[44] to Hungary to conduct a meeting with Hungarian writers Pál Szabó and Pétér Véres. Their mission was to persuade Hungarian writers to support the regime of the new head of Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party János Kádár.[45]

In December 1956, the CPS leadership started to use tougher language addressing the Slovak writers. This was in line with the new campaign against

41 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. P. David, kr. 2267, a. j. 43. Uznesenie Sekretariátu ÚV KSS zo dňa 9. novembra 1956 o kultúre; Leikert, *Taký bol Ladislav Mňačko,* 144.

42 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. P. David, kr. 2248, a. j. 319 Správa o slovenských spisovateľoch (1956).

43 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. P. David, kr. 2267, a. j. 40. Maďarsko, Poľsko.

44 In 1956 and in the later period writers Říha, Marek, and Egri were loyal to the official politics of the CPCz.

45 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 947. Zasadnutie BÚV KSS December 4, 1957. Informatívna správa o práci delegácie československých spisovateľov v Budapešti.

"revisionism," i.e. attempts at political liberalization in the Soviet bloc. On December 15, 1956, Bacílek threatened to prohibit the insubordinate from publishing. David, as the main hardliner within the CPS leadership, quoted the slogan pronounced by Klement Gottwald: "We will not allow subversion of the republic," which meant the direct threat of violent persecutions.[46] Hečko, who by this time was the chairman of the Union of Slovak Writers and remained committed to the official stance of the CPS, fell into full isolation within organization. He was no longer able to control it, although the party leaders expressed appreciation for his loyalist positions several times. This was the reason for his resignation. In the letter addressed to the CPS leadership on 31 December 1956, he stressed that his resignation was a "protest against the ideological distortions and revisionist tendencies within the Union of Slovak Writers and in all their facilities." He announced his withdrawal from the Union as well. Lazarová followed Hečko, and she withdrew from all duties within the Union of Slovak Writers as well, but she remained a member of organization.[47]

In spite of the increasingly open threats to the writers and the intervention of the official censorship, *Kultúrny život* pushed to continue its previous course. The editorial in the New Year issue in January 1957 confirmed the commitment of the journal to the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Writers. *Kultúrny život* was sharply attacked by the pro-regime writers, such as Miloš Krno[48] and poetess Krista Bendová.[49] Ideological Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPS Michalička was entrusted with the task of preparing a report on the situation in *Kultúrny život* and suggesting appropriate personnel measures. On the grounds of the reports of the state security forces, a new "categorization" of the Slovak writers and intellectuals was prepared. Hečko, Plávka, Mňačko, Lajčiak, Lazarová, Krno, and Bendová, along with philosophers Ladislav Szántó, Andrej Sirácky, and Michal Topoľský, literary scientist Andrej Mráz, historian Miloš

46 Pavel David, "Proti zvyškom buržoáznej ideológie" [Against the remains of bourgeois ideology], *Pravda,* December 18, 1956, 4.

47 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 963, Zasadnutie BÚV KSS November 1, 1957. List s. Františka Hečku Byru ÚV KSS zo 17. 10. 1957. Since the spring of 1956, Hečko had not taken part in the activities of the Union of Writers, because of his isolation from other writers and because of his health. Hečko and Jančová, *Denníky 1938–1960*.

48 Miloš Krno, "So zvýšenou zodpovednosťou do nového roku" [With increasing responsibility to the new year], *Pravda,* December 29, 1956, 5; Idem, "Zastieraním nesprávnych názorov nepomôžeme literatúre," 6.

49 Bendová, Krista. "Na okraj jednej polemiky" [Incidental remark to one polemic], *Pravda,* November 1, 1957, 7.

Gosiorovský, and actor Andrej Bagar were evaluated in a positive way as loyal and committed to the Party. The second group of writers, who were not "on the platform of Socialism and Socialist Realism," was, according to respective reports, represented by Špitzer, Tatarka, Kupec, Smrek, Reisel, Pavlík, Štítnický, poet Pavol Horov, literary scientist Alexander Matuška, etc. The third group, represented by poets Kostra and Vojtech Mihálik and novelist Ferdinand Gabaj, was characterized as "neutral."[50] However, the division of writers and intellectuals was more complicated. Some members of the first group were people who had joined the Communist Party before World War II or before the communist coup in February 1948, such as Szántó, Július J. Šefránek, Krno, Lajčiak, Sirácky, Plávka and Bagar, but some of them joined the Communist Party only after 1948, either out of of fear (Matuška) or for reasons of professional ambition, as in the case of Hečko, Gosiorovský, Mráz, Mihálik, Kostra, and others. Some of the intellectuals, who were mentioned in the category of "loyal" party members, already adopted a more critical stance with regards to the official course of CPCz, namely Mňačko and Lazarová. However, Mňačko, in spite of his critical remarks concerning official politics, maintained a close personal friendship with Bacílek,[51] and Lazarová was a secret informant of the state security forces. Some writers (Horov, Matuška) manifested their critical stance towards the politics of the CPCz only in private conversations, but the state security forces were well informed about these conversations. By that time, Smrek and Lukáč had been sent into "internal exile". Before the establishment of communist rule, they had been prominent poets, but due to their political engagement or non-Marxist ideological orientations they were essentially not allowed to publish their works.[52]

Bednár, who was not a member of the Communist Party and expressed his critical stance towards Stalinism, had been assumed to be the exemplary victim of the planned repressive measures, announced by David. His book *Hodiny a minúty* [Hours and Minutes], (1956) contained critical reflections on the moral failures of some active participants in the anti-fascist resistance after World War II and during the period of Stalinism. He wrote about misuses of power,

50 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. P. David, kr. 2248, a. j. 319 Správa o slovenských spisovateľoch (1956); SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 946, BÚV KSS April 5–6, 1957 Návrh téz na rezolúciu ÚV KSS k aktuálnym otázkam medzi inteligenciou.

51 Matejovič, *Vladimír Mináč a podoby literárneho diskurzu druhej polovice 20. storočia*, 122–24.

52 At least Smrek enjoyed high standing among Slovak intellectuals, and he spread some of his poems, which often were anti-communist, among his friends without official permission. Some of his poetry from the pre-war period was published only in 1954. His new poems, written after 1945, were officially published only in 1958, although they had been prepared for publication in 1957.

careerism, etc. The book was published during the short period of political "thaw" in 1956, when censorship was more relaxed. The official daily of the CPS, *Pravda* [Truth], published a review by an official of the Central Committee of the CPS apparatus Viliam Šalgovič (who was a former officer of the state security forces). According to him, Bednár was on the same platform as the people "we had fought against in the past," i.e. on the platform of the fascists and enemies of Socialism.[53] The state security forces considered imprisoning him, but the Party group in the Union of Slovak Writers in autumn 1956 refused to persecute Bednár. His book was reviewed in a positive way by many other writers and literary scientists, including Mňačko, Michal Chorváth, Ján Rozner, and others. In fact, none of the intellectuals was willing to publish a negative review, which would have contributed to his eventual imprisonment. On the other hand, the Commissioner of Interior Oskár Jeleň stated that the content of Bednár's book was "scary" and aimed "against our regime." He pointed out that the editors of *Kultúrny život* regularly submitted articles with "doubtful content," and they tried to persuade the officials of the STD to allow them to be published. Other members of the Bureau of the CPS urged the adoption of rigorous measures. David stressed that the conflict with *Kultúrny život* had to be solved at least before the CPS congress, scheduled for April 1957.[54] The Slovak leadership put economic pressure on the Union of Slovak Writers as well. They reduced the circulation of the literary journals *Kultúrny život, Mladá tvorba,* and *Slovenské pohľady* [Slovak views], all of which were published by the Union, allegedly because of a "shortage of paper."[55] Whereas Bednár managed to publish his book in the short period of thaw, the publication of a volume of short stories by Mináč entitled *Z nedávnych* čias [From the recent past],[56] which was prepared for release in 1957, was forbidden.

The presidium of the Union of Slovak Writers initiated an informal meeting with Zápotocký. The head of the Union's delegation was the chair of the Party group within the Union, translator Zora Jesenská. Špitzer was also a member of the delegation. He tried to explain to the president the arguments of the discontented writers. He rejected the notion that there was any connection

53 Viliam Šalgovič, "Slovo čitateľa spisovateľovi Alfonzovi Bednárovi" [Reader's word to the writer Alfonz Bednár], *Pravda,* April 25, 1957, 6

54 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 942, BÚV KSS March 8, 1957 Informácia s. Jeleňa o nepriaznivých zjavoch v Kultúrnom živote - ústne.

55 SNA, A ÚV KSS, f. PÚV KSS, kr. 940, BÚV KSS February 1, 1957 List Zväzu slovenských spisovateľov BÚV KSS vo veci rozpočtu na rok 1957.

56 Matejovič, "Mináč ako záhadný autor," 9–18.

between the "discussion" in Czechoslovakia and the Hungarian revolution, but he also disputed the official interpretation of the events in Hungary. According to him, the mere lack of the free exchange of ideas was the reason for the conflict. Zápotocký, however, did not make any changes to the hardline cultural policy. He stressed that the Party would not allow any discussion "aimed to destroy the target: socialism." "You can discuss at the closed meetings, we can admit even heretical views there, but not in public."[57]

The Slovak Party leadership decided on March 22, 1957 to establish a special commission at the Bureau led by Jeleň. At the same time, before the establishment of the commission, the members of the Bureau of the CPS decided to indicate Pavlík as an "ideological leader" of the "group" around the *Kultúrny život*, Kupec and Tatarka were indicated to be the main representatives of the "wrong views." Špitzer was accused of being responsible for the publication of their works, and Štítnický was blamed for alleged "dodging and temporizing" within the leadership of the Union of Slovak Writers. Although Tatarka was criticized several times by the high-ranking party official, at least he was not identified as a member of this "group." The purpose of the commission was to force the abovementioned intellectuals to deliver "self-criticism."

The target of criticism was not only the Union of Writers and the literary journals *Kultúrny život* and *Mladá tvorba*, but also the Section of the Social Sciences in the Slovak Academy of Sciences, some other publishing houses, the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava, and the journal *Slovenské pohľady*." David suggested accusing the "group" consisting of Pavlík, Špitzer, Kupec and Štítnický of "bourgeois nationalism." "We didn't fight against them enough," he contended.

The members of the commission established by the Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPS accused Pavlík and his colleagues of being the Slovak version of the "Petöfi circle," the Hungarian forum of intellectual dissent in 1956. Jeleň compared the activities of *Kultúrny život* with the attempts to create a "second ideological center," and the head of the Board of Commissioners accused Pavlík of ambitions to play the role of Imre Nagy in Slovakia. Initially, the Bureau of the CPS did not intend to expel the discontented intellectuals from the Party. However, the Czechoslovak Party leadership decided on April 9, 1957 to expel Pavlík from the Communist Party. Other members of the so-called

57 Juraj Špitzer, "Diskusia u Zápotockého" [Discussion with Antonín Zápotocký – notes] (1957), manuscript. Inheritance of Juraj Špitzer, personal archive of Dalma Špitzerová (wife of Špitzer).

"group," i.e. Špitzer, Kupec, and Štítnický, were removed from their positions within the Union of Slovak Writers. Pro-regime poet Plávka was appointed as the new secretary of the Union of Slovak Writers. However, in his reply to a question of Novotný regarding the scope of the "group," Bacílek insisted that Tatarka and Mináč were involved, in part. He stressed the existence of the close ties with other former Slovak high-ranking Communist politicians, namely Edo Friš, Samuel Falťan, and Anton Rašla.

In spite of the political and economic pressure put on the Union of Slovak Writers by the CPS leadership, the Party organization at the Union did not accept the resolution against Pavlík and *Kultúrny život*. Ján Prohácka became the new editor-in-chief of the journal. The campaign against the writers continued in June 1956, after the plenary session of the Central Committee of CPCz, which focused on ideological issues. Secretary of the Central Committee of CPCz Hendrych stressed that the CPCz leadership would not allow a "hostile crusade as a token of the struggle against so-called Stalinism, that is, an attempt to destroy the revolutionary foundations of our Marxist-Leninist doctrine." He refused any manifestations of so-called "revisionism," and he identified the major task as "discovering and disarming" all of its expressions permanently.[58] Kopecký addressed his speech directly to the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. He demanded explicit distancing from the speeches that had been given by Hrubín and Seifert at the Congress in April 1956. He accused Mináč and Tatarka of "liberalism."[59] Subsequently, at the plenary session of Czech writers on June 26, 1957, the leaders of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers delivered a self-critical report, in which they rejected all "wrong tendencies."[60] The resolution of the plenary session contained a condemnation of the statements made at the Congress in 1956. Although the Slovak Union of Writers was only the regional branch of the single centralized writers' union in Czechoslovakia, its reactions to Hendrych's and Kopecký's speeches were different. The leadership of the Slovak organization unanimously approved the thesis of Hendrych's report, but they did not adopt any resolution condemning the writers' congress or the activities of *Kultúrny život*. The enlarged session of the Party group at the Union of Slovak Writers convoked on September 18–19, 1957 in the presence of Bacílek, Jeleň, and Michalička with the aim of condemning the congress did not meet the expectations of the organizers. In fact, only Krno, Hečko, and the representative

58 NA, A ÚV KSČ, f. 01, sv. 55, a. j. 57.

59 Ibid.

60 "Zo snemovania Sväzu čs. Spisovateľov," 1, 3, 6.

of the group of Ukrainian writers living in Slovakia supported the speeches of the official representatives of the Communist Party. The rest of writers present either did not say anything or rejected the persecutions against *Kultúrny život,* for instance Špitzer, Kupec, Mňačko, Štítnický, Mináč, Karvaš, and even the writers considered loyal pillars of the official cultural policy, such as Kostra. Some members of the Bureau of the Central Committee of CPS analyzing the results of the session said that the CPS did not have any "core" within the writers' organization. The Slovak Party leadership considered the results of the meeting with the writers a clear failure. Therefore, the plenary session of the entire Union of Slovak Writers took place only on December 19–20, 1957, but the issue of the writers' congress in April 1956 was not discussed.[61] In February 1958, Tatarka was forced to withdraw from the Committee of the Union of Writers as well. The reasons were his articles published in *Kultúrny život*.

Conclusions

The rebellion conducted by some of the Czechoslovak intellectuals in 1956 was suppressed. However, whereas in the Czech lands the Czechoslovak Party leadership successfully managed to compel or persuade writers to capitulate, i.e. to distance themselves from the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Writers in April 1956, in Slovakia they did not enjoy the same success. Although the Slovak writers were not more radical in their requirements than their Czech colleagues, they resisted more efficaciously. The leadership of CPS was forced to restore control over the writers' union and literary journals through administrative measures, although they tried to avoid it. One of the very important results of the short-term liberalization of cultural policy in Slovakia in the spring of 1956 was the establishment of the new literary journal *Mladá tvorba*. The new journal provided a forum for the publication of several "generation layers"[62] of younger poets and writers who had not been able to or had not wanted to publish their works after 1948, because the works in question had not conformed to the obligatory style of "Socialist Realism." From this perspective, the new milestones in Slovak literature were not only the novels and short stories by Bednár or "Demon of Agreement" by Tatarka, but also the publication of the first collection of poetry by Milan Rúfus (*Až dozrieme,* or "When We Grow Mature," 1956), which became

61 Chorváth, "Pred plenárkou slovenských spisovateľov," 1, 4.

62 Petrík, *Hodnoty* a *podnety*, 274.

a signal of the comeback of lyrical poetry based on the individual's reflections on the surrounding world. At the same time, the poetry of Kupec (*Nížinami, výšinami*, 1955) was a signal of the return to the sensualist poetry characteristic of the interwar avant-garde movements. The "thaw" in 1956 brought the first attempts to return to literature by non-communist authors, which had been forbidden since 1948. However, the process of the "rehabilitation" of the Slovak non-communist literary heritage took a long time, and it continued well into the second half of 1960s. In spite of the strengthening of censorship, which began in the summer of 1956, the volume of the new poetry of Smrek was published in 1958 (*Obraz sveta*, "Image of the World"), which contained several allegorical allusions to communist ideology and politics.

The most significant change was a discreet, unspectacular change in the relations between intellectuals and power. This process had already begun in 1955, thus, the 20th Congress of the CPSU was not so much a new spark as it was an event that catalyzed and accelerated discussions among the Slovak writers. Very strong informal ties persisted between pro-communist intellectuals, who remained committed to the official ideology in spite of having criticized the cultural policy of the regime and the lack of the freedom of speech. This was true of writers such as Mňačko, Štítnický, Mináč and Špitzer. On the other hand, if the ruling elites wanted to restore their control over the Union of Writers and the journal *Kultúrny život*, they could not rely on the loyal writers within the union and the literary community. They were forced to take administrative measures. Due to the low support among intellectuals, but also due to the exhaustion of the rigid style known as Socialist Realism, it was impossible to restore the esthetics and power relations in the field of culture that had prevailed in the period before 1956. The mechanisms of direct control and censorship were still applied, but to a lesser extent than in the first half of 1950s. In addition to these mechanisms, mechanisms of "negotiation" were often applied, especially in terms of censorship. The lack of any direct confrontation between the communist power and intellectuals in 1956 contributed to the gradual liberalization of cultural policy during the second wave of de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia, which began in 1963. Although the "cultural ferment" in Czechoslovakia and, in particular, in Slovakia was in many ways connected with the processes underway at the time in Poland and Hungary, it was an autonomous movement. In the case of postwar Czechoslovakia, it is significant that even the clashes between the intellectuals and power took place, to a large extent, separately in the Czech lands and Slovakia.

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Socialist-Era New Yugoslav Feminism between "Mainstreaming" and "Disengagement": The Possibilities for Resistance, Critical Opposition and Dissent[1]

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Through a focus on early publications by feminist intellectuals in Yugoslavia during the 1970s, this paper aims to demonstrate methods of feminist critique of the theory and practice of women's emancipation in the context of a state socialist (in this case self-managing socialist) country in East Central Europe. After a brief overview of feminist organizing in Yugoslavia until the late 1980s, this paper looks at conferences and journal publications, which also provides the opportunity to better understand the workings of the Yugoslav public space and publishing processes. The text, written with a conceptual and intellectual historical focus, analyzes the discursive interventions and reformulations of matters related to women's emancipation. The new Yugoslav feminist approaches rethought and reformulated the "women's question." Reading the prevailing currents of feminism in North America and Western Europe, feminists in Yugoslavia searched for ways to reframe this question into a critique that was constructive as well as innovative in its own context.

Keywords: Feminism, dissent, socialism, women's question, Marxism, sisterhood.

"Criticism of the family and marriage […] is already the criticism of the state itself," wrote Rada Iveković in 1981.[2] This sentence reveals the essential role of feminism in post-Second World War East Europea[n socialist states, which, however, was an underrepresented discourse amid the variety of dissent, dissidence and countercultural criticism. The close reading of the work of feminists during the 1970s and 1980s in Yugoslavia, where feminism reappeared in a semi-organized form and with a wide range of activities—from intellectual discussion through artwork to explicit political activism—tells us a lot about the

1 This paper is based on my PhD dissertation, "Learning a Feminist Language: The Intellectual History of Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s," submitted and defended at the Central European University in 2015. I also rely extensively on my articles "'Nem osztálykérdés, nem biológiai meghatározottság.' A feminista ellenzék elméleti keretei a Tito alatti Jugoszláviában" and another one entitled "New Feminist Identity and Politics through Conceptual Transfers and Activist Inspirations in Yugoslavia in the 1970–80s" in the collective volume edited by Joachim Haeberlen and Mark Szajbel Keck (to be published in 2017).

2 Iveković, "Indija je nijema žena," 101.

potential critiques of state-socialist women's emancipation in general and thus it is relevant for the region of state-socialist Eastern Europe, while it also allows us to understand the specificities of self-managing Yugoslavia. In this paper, I focus on the early, mostly academic, publications by feminists in Yugoslavia in order to show some of the possibilities and actual meanings of feminist opposition in the context of a socialist state. I argue that their activity is somewhere in between the two ends of the scale that Linda Briskin calls "mainstreaming" and "disengagement," between trying to negotiate their agenda into the official policies and self-organizing critical, external discourses and actions.[3]

My approach comes from intellectual and conceptual history. While conceptual history focuses on the meanings of the texts through a contextual reading, for feminist historiography, there is always an explicit political stake in recovering events of the past. In my reading, the two support each other in the sense that it is in the interest of feminist historiography to have meanings of concepts central to certain recovered ideologies, while the contextualism of intellectual history implicitly and often even explicitly subscribes to the importance of the personal within the political. The strategies behind feminist movements always necessarily involve an intervention with language and a struggle for meanings, the reconstruction of which is the primary aim of conceptual and intellectual history—which at the very same time respects the importance of the role of the personal and the individual as well.

The interpretative techniques I employ here focus on written sources, published (articles in newspapers, magazines, journals, as well as books) and unpublished (primarily archival documentation of activist work), artworks and videos, and also oral history interviews with the participants of the feminist groups. I base my analysis on the work and discourse of the members of feminist groups called *Žena i društvo* [Woman and Society] and their allies. I call the phenomenon in focus *new Yugoslav feminism*. Some publications and some members of the *Žena i društvo* use the term "*neofeminizam*," that is "new feminism"—a name that not all participants, however, acknowledged. "New feminism" is also a general name widely used to describe that version of feminism, which in its diversity emerges in the 1960s in Western Europe and North America. This is what is

3 Briskin, "Feminist Practice." The political scientists Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, delineate the concepts of "ethical civil society" and "political society." In that framework, which was applied to Central European dissent by Alan Renwick, new Yugoslav feminism would be closer to political society in which the dissenting group still chooses to engage the state in some form of dialogue. Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition;* Renwick, "Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist?," 287.

mostly known today as the "second wave," another problematic term I will try to avoid using, because it blends an at least 100-year-long complex history of feminist movements and discourses into one "wave."[4] However, for the Yugoslav feminists of the 1970s, the designation "new" refers to the pre-Second World War feminist history of the country, and this conscious admittance of continuity is important to highlight. The women and few men active in and around the *Žena i društvo* groups in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb were not a fixed and coherent group throughout the almost 20 years in focus in this paper. The individual stakes and life trajectories, the different intellectual approaches, the inherent differences within the local scenes intellectually and in the actual infrastructures make this a loose network, connected, however, by the shared fascination of a feminist critique of socialism in Yugoslavia.

The Return of Feminism

The story begins in the early 1970s: at this time, what we find in the open is journal publications and what we find backstage is a handful of young women and a few university professors. As we can see from the interviews and from their biographies, these women came from a rather homogeneous social background and, with two exceptions, were from the same generation. This generation was born after the Second World War to mothers who had a first-hand war experience and were themselves very often active participants of the partisan movement. Unlike their mothers, they were puzzled by the contradiction between the promise of the regime and their own experience of their own emancipation. They were also critical of the idea that their mothers had equality with men: the way they saw it, these women were far from having equal rights and status.[5] Academia seemed to be a relatively safe space for the first tentative publications about "what is happening to American women."[6] The interest, of course, was not only in women in the United States: Europe and the "Third World" were on the radar too, especially Italy, England, France, Germany and India.

4 Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 27–28, and Hewitt, "Introduction," 1–2.

5 Cf. Sharon Zukin about Praxis: "For several older members of this group, the collective odyssey in dissent began in an unlikely way, in teenage heroism with the Partisans during World War II. […] They were still party members and, unlike Đilas, remained in the party until the late 1960s." Zukin, "Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia," 131.

6 Mežnarić, "Što se događa s američkom ženom?"

The new feminists in Yugoslavia could explore the possibilities of a feminist critique of state socialism in the space between the official and the unofficial.[7] They started with meetings in each other's homes, which later moved to the student centers and research institutes until they formed their own semi-institutions with the foundation of the SOS helplines and the shelters. There is a difference between the activities in the three major cities in which the *Žena i društvo* groups were organized. University seminars or talks took place mostly in Ljubljana and Zagreb, where the groups called *Žena i društvo* were part of post-secondary sociology departments. In Ljubljana, the ŠKUC, i.e., the *Študentski kulturno-umetniški center* [Students' Cultural and Art Center], was an equally important venue at which the feminists shared the space with other countercultural and political groups, such the punk and green movements. The most important feature of the Ljubljana group was that lesbian women and straight or still closeted lesbian women worked together in the same group from the beginning. In the mid-1980s, the lesbian members played an increasingly defining role in Belgrade too. In Belgrade, the most important stronghold of new feminism was the SKC, the Students' Cultural Center, where the director of the Gallery of the SKC, later the director of the whole institution, was Dunja Blažević. Under the auspices of the SKC, the first international feminist conference in Yugoslavia took place in 1978. Many women joined the feminist circles after attending this conference called *Drug-ca žena: Novi pristup* [Comradeess Woman: a New Approach].

This famous and canonical conference, however, was preceded by many publications (already in 1972)[8] and a lot of brainstorming, even feminist presentations at the conferences organized by the state women's organization, the *Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena* [Conference for the Social Participation of Women], that is, KDAŽ, first in 1976 in Portorož.[9] In Belgrade, the SKC offered a series of discussions, the *tribine*. The conferences (the 1978 international one

7 Even though most literature does not refer to Yugoslav self-managing socialism as "state socialism," I use the term to differentiate the political regimes in post-Second World War Eastern Europe from socialist ideas, diverse as they are, and to strengthen my argument that the feminist critique in Yugoslavia may be relevant for the entire region.

8 Mežnarić, "Što se događa s američkom ženom?"

9 The other events and conferences regarding the "women's question" also necessarily opened up a space for feminist or proto-feminist discussions, though these were not related to the work of the new Yugoslav feminists. For example, as early as 1976 there was a summer school about the "women's question" at the Inter-University Center in Dubrovnik. Mitrović, "Genealogy of the Conferences on Women's Writing," 167. Also cf. Bonfiglioli, "Revolutionary Networks," and Dobos, "The Women's Movement in Yugoslavia."

in Belgrade, and then the Yugoslav feminist conferences in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990) and the summer schools at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik beginning in 1987 were attracting the largest audiences and opened up to women who would otherwise not have attended the feminist meetings. After 1985, the small group meetings returned: these were a space in which personal experiences were emphasized (very similar to the consciousness-raising groups elsewhere) and the training groups for the SOS helplines for abused women and victims of domestic violence required the closed format. At the same time, because of the SOS helpline and the activities around it, the feminists reached a much wider audience, which could have even served as a basis for a wider grassroots movement had the war not broken out. The women and few men in the three cities cooperated very closely in the creation of these helplines, sharing knowledge and experience.

During the early phase that is the focus of this paper, journal publications were of crucial importance. Because of the influence of some professors and the openness of some women officials in the KDAŽ, some of the young women and men could participate in the conferences and editorial work of the journal *Žena* [Woman]. As we shall see and as research shows, some of the women indeed were dedicated to the betterment of women's position in society, to such an extent that they were willing to give space to the feminist ideas of young women—ideas with which they themselves did not agree. This makes *Žena* an interesting case study of inter-generational and inter-ideological encounters.

Meanwhile, the array of journals accepting feminist articles was extended relatively quickly. From 1975 on, it included social science and humanities journals such as *Pitanja* [Questions], *Naše teme* [Our topics], *Argumenti* [Arguments], *Ideje* [Ideas], *Socijalizam u svetu* [Socialism in the World], *Republika* [Republic], etc., and in the 1980s *Problemi* [Problems] in Slovenia. The student journals *Mladina* in Ljubljana and *Student* and *Vidici* [Views] in Belgrade also provided important forums for new feminist discussions, which is not by accident: the youth organizations enjoyed relative freedom from state control in their activities.[10] With time, the feminist articles reached a wider audience through newspapers and weeklies, such as *Danas* [Today] and *Start*, as well as women's magazines, such as *Bazar* published in Belgrade*, Svijet* [World] in Zagreb and *Jana* in Ljubljana.[11] *Naša*

10 The reasons and explanations behind this widely repeated statement are explored in detail in the work of Zubak, "The Yugoslav Youth Press (1968–1980)."

11 In the period under study, the five women's magazines in Serbo-Croatian with the highest circulation were: *Svijet* (published in Zagreb from 1953 to 1992); *Praktična žena* (Belgrade, 1956 to 1993); *Bazar*

žena [Our women], another print medium in Ljubljana, was a magazine situated on the spectrum between the more serious *Žena*, which still followed the party lines regarding the women's question, and the popular women's magazines (some of which, such as *Bazar* and *Svijet*, occasionally did publish feminist articles). The full picture of the feminist discussions, however, includes art, literature, as well as literary and art theory, besides the academic discussions and the activist work. Because of the curators at the SKC, art and literature were extensively present in the feminist programs, including the flourishing artists from Zagreb such as Sanja Iveković. Possibilities for feminist writing were presented and discussed through the work of Irena Vrkjlan, Dubravka Ugrešić and Biljana Jovanović, among others.

The history of the new Yugoslav feminism has its own periodization, while it was running parallel with the new or second wave feminisms in the "West" after the beginnings in the early 1970s, which was characterised by private (kitchen table) conversations and academic publishing, there was a turn around the years 1985–86, called a "second wave" by many, when group members wanted a change in the work of the groups that would serve to focus more on activism and consciousness-raising in small, women-only groups. The next phase in their story started around 1990, when more and more new and much more diverse groups were born out of the *Žena i društvo* circles and went in different directions. These directions ranged from political and anti-war activism through a more spelled-out LGBTQ activism to anti-violence activism and institutionalization of feminist knowledge through the creation of women's studies or gender studies centers and departments at universities or parallel to them.[12]

The type of critique the feminists in Yugoslavia articulated towards the system is hard to compare to any other form of opposition in the region at the time. While there is a temptation to attribute the phenomenon to the exceptionality of Yugoslav self-managing socialism,[13] the situation is more complex than that. Due to the organization of the state, the KDAŽ, the student centers as well as the journals and magazines (those in various constellations) were working under the umbrella of the SSRNJ [*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije* –

(Belgrade, 1964 to 1990); *Nada* (Belgrade, 1975 to 1993 and re-launched in 2001); and *Una* (Sarajevo, 1974 to 1994). Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 78.

12 With regard to wartime, cf. eg.: Mladjenovic and Hughes, "Feminist Resistance to War and Violence in Serbia"; Žarkov, *The Body of War*; Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air*; Bilić and Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil*; Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood*; Miškovska-Kajevska, *Taking a Stand in Times of Violent Societal Changes*.

13 From the abundant literature on Yugoslav self-management, cf. Pavlowitch, *Yugoslavia* (esp. from p. 175); Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*; Mezei, et al. *Samoupravni socijalizam*.

Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia].[14] This, as I explain later in this paper was, however, far from a complete freedom of the press, but there were just enough cracks in the wall that a wide selection ideas, including feminist ones, could reach the public. In addition to the legal and infrastructural circumstances, there is a crucial source of historical inspiration that is also part of the explanation: the large numbers of women involved in the partisan movement,[15] their active participation in the National Liberation Struggle and the basis this gave to the extensive emancipation of women after the Second World War, which indeed did entail substantial societal change.[16] (Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, there is important current research on the state violence exerted against women in Yugoslavia in addition to the literature on women's emancipation.)[17] Besides these two factors, I would emphasize the importance of contingency: that these women in the *Žena i društvo* groups met, decided to like each other, decided to focus on feminism, decided to organize the women-only discussion forums and made smaller- and larger-scale decisions that subsequently defined their path. It was the path to feminism, instead of liberalism, deconstruction, Marxist revisionism, nationalism, to mention a few schools that did flourish at the time in the other socialist countries in the region despite the prevailing censorship, despite the lack of a partisan tradition and despite the closed borders.[18]

Dissent, Resistance, Mainstreaming and Disengagement

The new Yugoslav feminists held a position vis-à-vis the state that was between opposition and inner critique. The entire post-socialist master narrative deserves a more refined approach in order that they not "implicitly and explicitly reproduce binary categories of the Cold War and the opposition between 'first world' and 'second world'," thus ignoring the ethical and aesthetic complexities

14 Thompson, *Forging War*, 13.

15 Wiesinger, *Partisaninnen*; Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945*; Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*.

16 Cf. Gudac-Dodić, *Žena u socijalizmu*; Perović, ed., *Žene i deca 4*; Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*. About the previous and later phases of Yugoslav feminism, cf. Petrović, Jelena and Damir Arsenijević eds. *Jugoslovenski feminizma.*

17 Jambrešić Kirin, "Komunističko totalitarno nasilje; idem, "Žene u formativnom socijalizmu"; idem, *Dom i svijet*.

18 Cf. e.g., Kopeček and Wcíslik, eds., *Political Thought* and Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence*.

of socialist life.[19] For various reasons, new Yugoslav feminism is a case par excellence of the productive encounter of discourses. Engaging in a dialogue with the state, building on its promise of gender equality, the new Yugoslav feminists do not directly oppose the Yugoslav state, but see the place of women there as constant opposition. The disappointment of this new generation of young women is similar to the experience of the feminists in the United States and Western Europe and this aspect should be constantly kept in mind when we discuss the difference between the so-called East and the so-called West. Despite the differences in the economic and political systems, the new feminist movement and ideology was born out of a disappointment with the promises of left politics, that is, with the socialist regime in Yugoslavia and the new left, the civil rights movements and the anti-war movements in Western Europe and North America.[20]

The new Yugoslav feminists learned about the situation of women in the West and the criticism of existing democracies through the inner, feminist dissidence,[21] thus they were inspired and critical of Western capitalist democracies at the same time, unlike, for example, the liberal dissident groups in Central Europe. The new Yugoslav feminism, as we shall see, voiced strict criticism through pointing out the systemic nature of the oppression of women, thematizing women's sexuality and, most importantly, being the first to thematize the violence that women endure without the intervention of the system. Their claim is that the state did not change the *status quo,* one of their conclusions being that once the regime was built on patriarchy it became ideologically impossible for women to achieve real equality.

I call the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia a critical one, more similar in its attempt to engage the state in a dialogue than refusing it per se as most dissidence does. In the meantime, it makes sense to look at this new feminism in light of dissenting discourses because of the dissenting status of feminism elsewhere and because of the windows the dissidents themselves offer for this.[22] The new feminists in Yugoslavia did not publish in samizdat nor were they imprisoned for their writings. However, they were in search of critical

19 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever,* 9.

20 Cf. e.g., Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" and Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution*. Hartmann's text was published in Yugoslavia as well: Hartmann, "Nesrećni brak marksizma i feminizma."

21 Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship"; Graycar, ed., *Dissenting Opinions.* Also, cf. Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*.

22 The political scientist Tihomir Cipek and the historian Katarina Spehnjak provide a list of all the non-researched possible forms of "opposition," "dissent," "antipolitics" and "resistance" in the former

or oppositional positions within the state's mainstream. They created a micro space in which nonconformist ideas could be discussed and critical thoughts disseminated outside the official classroom space and in which new research was done despite the resistance of the institutions.

Sharon Zukin, looking at "possibilities of dissent" in Yugoslavia, argues that "[i]n states that claim to operate on the basis of a Marxist ideology, there is an enormous vulnerability to dissent because of the gap between theory and practice. In capitalist states, dissent arises in more limited institutional contexts, notably over the excesses of administrative agencies or the dishonesty of executive authorities."[23] Zukin claims that due to the framework, the activity of Đilas or the Praxis group is closer to "whistle-blowing" in the United States than to East European dissidence. In the meantime, she also debates the "liberalism" of the Yugoslav state, suggesting rather discussing different strategies of control, such as creating a controlled space within the state: "neither self-management nor market socialism is as central to Yugoslav development as the relatively non-coercive strategies of labor mobilization and capital accumulation that the leadership established in response to internal and external pressures beginning in 1947 and 1948. And it is wrong to characterize these strategies as liberalism."[24] Even for critical intellectual positions, a publication in a scholarly journal or in the form of poetry could entail severe consequences.[25] Editors of journals could also be dismissed by the "publisher" of the journal, i.e., the associations, companies, social, political, educational and other specialized professional institutions[26] that were working under the umbrella of the SSRNJ.[27]

Besides the organizational aspect, according to the data provided by Pedro (Sabrina) Ramet, 80 per cent of journalists were party members and the information published about politics and the economy was acquired mostly via governmental channels. Robinson confirms Ramet's thesis: based on research regarding "freedom of criticism in various Yugoslav elites," journalists tend to

Yugoslav member state of Croatia, and in their categorization, new Yugoslav feminism belongs under these labels. Cipek and Spehnjak, "Croatia."

23 Zukin, "Sources of Dissent and Nondissent," 119.

24 Ibid., 120.

25 Cf. the dismissal of the Praxis professors, and in 1971, during the era of the so-called liberalization, the cases of Ignjatović, Gojko Đogo and Janez Janša. Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*; Miller, *The Nonconformists;* and Gállos, *Szlovéniai változások*.

26 Zukin, "Sources of Dissent and Nondissent," 122.

27 Thompson, *Forging War,* 13.

be less critical than other groups of the Yugoslav decision-making élite.[28] Part of the explanation for this tendency lies in the highly political process of their selection. Furthermore, there were annual reviews of the media products and the supervising body, like the publisher's councils under the authority of the SSRNJ, which could issue warnings, impose penalties on editors, or even dismiss them and the journalists who wrote articles the council found unacceptable. In some cases, issues of journals or newspapers could be banned or confiscated. In the case of those newspapers, journals or magazines that were funded by the SKJ or the SSRNJ, the end of funding meant the end of the medium as well, the most famous example being the journal *Praxis*.[29]

The new Yugoslav feminists, therefore, did not face the same level of persecution that the dissidents of Central European countries or the Soviet Union did.[30] On the other hand, there is barely any talk about the situation of women in the work of dissidence in Central Europe and the Soviet Union: they overlook the shortcomings of state socialism in this regard, which largely defines the possibilities of thinking about feminism in their discourse after 1989. The difficulties of developing a feminist movement in the new democracies in East Central Europe have been raised by many authors.[31] In countries that offer a rich and compelling discussion of human rights, freedom of speech and social justice, the violation of women in the private sphere and exclusion of women from the public gets little attention, an issue that, with few exceptions, has not been examined by existing scholarship until very recently. The new Yugoslav feminist criticism of the state, although it was not a dissident group per se, but something between cooperation and dissidence, helps us to understand what would have been the opportunities in other East European countries to develop a feminist dissidence. The case of new Yugoslav feminism explains to us how the ambivalent emancipation offered by the state socialist regimes made it impossible for dissidents who by the 1980s almost entirely gave up on Marxism

28 Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media,* 125.

29 Ramet, "The Yugoslav Press in Flux," 110.

30 Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence;* Csizmadia, *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék*; Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics*; Pollack and Wielgohs, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*; Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society*; Satterwhite, V*arieties of Marxist Humanism*; Shore, *Caviar and Ashes.*

31 See Harms, "Destined or Doomed?" and about the case the Polish Solidarity: Long, *We All Fought for Freedom* and Penn, *Solidarity's Secret.*

to relate to a feminism that had to at least partly acknowledge some of the improvements in the situation of women in socialist countries.[32]

Investigating Possibilities of a Feminist Critique of Marxian Thought and Yugoslav Socialism

Through their textual interventions, the new Yugoslav feminists not only opposed the state, they also stretched the boundaries of the ways academia thinks of itself and the ways the state presents the position of women in Yugoslavia. Through the reading of new feminist texts from the United States and Western Europe as well as critical Marxist texts from different schools of thought and sometimes even through philosophy from India, the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia attributes new meanings to the concept of feminism itself. Their political action in academic discussions is rather a discursive one: balancing between disengagement and mainstreaming,[33] they try to create a new language to talk about women's emancipation and the relations between men and women. This involves not only redefining what *feminism* means, but also the reconceptualization of *consciousness*, *women's universal experience*, *patriarchy*, *family*, *work*, "*homosexuality*,"[34] the relationship between the *private* and the *public* as well as the introduction of the concept of *gender*.

The theme of the relations between the communists and the women's movement is paradigmatic for the focus of the discourse, inasmuch that leftist, Marxist and socialist feminisms from all over the world prevail in the new Yugoslav feminist intertexts. This always linked the feminist discussions to the broader frame of Yugoslav state socialist ideology. Both the context and the audience, i.e., the community of the text's implied readers (including the fellow authors in this very issue of the journal *Dometi* [Throw], mostly from

32 About Marxism and what happens to it, cf. Miller, "Where Was the Serbian Havel"; Judt, "The Dilemmas of Dissidence"; Kopeček, "Human Rights Facing a National Past."

33 Briskin, "Feminist Practice," 26, 29.

34 Since it is a development of the last decade, the acronym LGBTQ is unused in the texts that I analyze. Probably no one even dreamed that the movement of people with a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender or queer identity would reach a level at which they would have the power to choose their own name. In the research material, the most advanced texts make mention of *gej* [gay] and *lezbejka* [lesbian] people, although the most common is *homoseksualci* [homosexuals]. Since the current position of the movements fighting for the equal rights of LGBTQ people find the term "homosexual" to be offensive, one pathologizing and stigmatizing LGBTQ people, I will refrain from its use unless in quotations and will only use LGBT or LGBTQ in my own discourse.

the *Žena i društvo* group), support this interpretation. There is a debate about a new approach (*novi pristup*) to the women's question (*žensko pitanje*) in Yugoslavia, which for the protagonists of my text is more or less explicitly the new feminism, *neofeminizam*. In several introductions of journal special issues, the editors openly admit that their quest aims to learn from the feminists elsewhere—the difference is in the scale of how many positive elements they find and to what extent is it the negative examples that teach about paths not to be taken. Therefore, it is not only Žarana Papić in the more independent youth journal *Student* in 1976 (cf. below), but also several articles in *Žena* and other journals, such as *Argumenti* (publishing a documentation of the legendary 1978 *Drug-ca žena* conference) that give voice to the opinion framed by Mirjana Oklobdžija in *Dometi* "that even today, in all societies to a smaller or greater extent, women are 'second rate citizens.'"[35]

Instead of the state-offered discourse on the women's question (*žensko pitanje*), investigations of the ideas of the new feminism bring along a conceptual replacement of the former with the latter. Texts started to emerge only in the early 1970s: reports on the new feminist movement in the United States and various countries of Western Europe, from time to time even South America and Asia, were also published. In reflection on the proclaimed success of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia, there are at least two parallel stories about feminisms "elsewhere" with emphasis on the "new feminism." Telling the story of new feminisms in the world involves evaluation and therefore reveals the opinion of the authors, in the manner of which these can be read as manifestos on behalf of the authors. Especially in case of those Yugoslav new feminists who, either as young scholars, like Rada Iveković or Žarana Papić, or as established professors, like Blaženka Despot or Gordana Bosanac, were attempting to introduce a new, competing ideology for which the innocent-looking informative introductions to the currents of "new feminism" in other countries proved to be a good strategy.

In exploring the different strategies aimed at gaining a place in the discourse for new feminism through transfers and translations, I read Rada Iveković's review on Italian feminism as an implicit programmatic text for the new feminism in Yugoslavia. The article was published almost ten years after the first endeavors to understand the new feminist phenomena, the time being mature enough for making explicit claims of themes and concepts. In Iveković's article,[36]

35 Oklobdžija, "Uvod," 4.

36 Iveković, "Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret," 34. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

feminism is presented through the history of the Italian communists, which bears many similarities to the history of Yugoslav communists. What makes the text programmatic is the way the author makes an attempt to reconcile the relationship between the women's movement and the communists – in Italy. The story Iveković presents can be read as an implicit parabolic tale for how the relationship of feminism and the communist party should take shape in Yugoslavia. It does tell the story without explicitly pointing out the similarities, though these similarities nevertheless stand out.

The article begins with the emphasis on the proletarian roots of the women's movement, which outweigh the traditions of the civil-rights-based bourgeois roots. Iveković discusses in detail the situation and its consequences when the more radical and revolutionary women at the fin-de-siècle joined the Socialist Party of Italy (SPI), which in 1911 severed the ties with the bourgeois women's groups that were demanding franchise for women. This meant the "liquidation of the women's question," with the elimination of the claim for suffrage, which was otherwise also supported by the revolutionary feminists. The SPI's argument was that this issue did not concern either the class struggle or the working class and thus the paths of the communists and the women's movement parted for a lengthy period of time. According to Iveković, the interwar period brought along the recognition that there was need for a separate proletarian women's movement, because the working class is ruled by conservative prejudice against women. However, not much changed in the interwar period, when the major issue was the struggle against fascism and women's emancipation was present only as a remnant from the previous century ("instead of the swing of the revolutionary flame").

After the overview of the changes after the Second World War, including the guarantee of the franchise for women, Iveković summarizes the conclusion for the new Italian feminists: despite the normative questions being solved and the laws having been changed "in bourgeois society," the patriarchal mentality prevailed, proving to be the main barrier to women's liberation (37). This conclusion is followed by a positive evaluation of the appearance of *neofeminizam* in Italy in the years 1968–69, which stemmed from the new left movements and student protests, from the experience that even within the student movement women face the same marginalization and discrimination. Feminism in Italy, Iveković concludes, is "without doubt an *oppositional movement* in relation to the existing social order" as "masses of women, mostly young ones, cannot identify with a single existing political party, not even in the left" (39, emphasis mine).

Besides this left-wing feminism, Iveković mentions "that other feminism," "bourgeois and sexist, which identifies men as the enemy" This idea comes up in other texts I analyze below, addressing the juxtaposition of "good" and "bad" feminisms.

The importance and specificity of *neofeminizam* in Italy lay in highlighting various topics, which repeatedly return as central concepts of the new Yugoslav feminist discourse: women's creativity in the arts and the humanities, the debates about sexuality (in Italy mostly with regard to the right to contraception and abortion), consciousness-raising – and through this, the relations between the public and the private, domestic violence and sexual violence. The article ends with the optimistic conclusion: "It is encouraging [to see] that all women with a leftist orientation in Italy are in accord in their struggle, regardless of whether they belong or do not belong to regular parties. Because they all belong to the women's movement in a broad sense. This way, today even communist women proudly announce that they are also feminists (44)." The story Iveković tells, with the closure about the success of the feminists, makes the reader think of this as a path to follow.

The implied conclusions for the new Yugoslav feminism are manifold. The argument that the roots of the women's movement, both in the late nineteenth century—fin-de-siècle (first wave) and in the 1960s (second wave), are deeper in the worker's movement and the in the political left in general addresses both the state establishment and those who want to join the new groups and share the ideas. Further elements of the analysis, which can be directly translated into the current Yugoslav context, are those of the relations between the SPI and the women's movements in the interwar period and during the Second World War, highlighting the parallel between the NOB (*Narodna oslobodilačka borba* – People's Liberation Struggle) and the *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* [Alliance of the Women's Movements] and the feminist examination of the reasons for which women's equality had not been achieved despite the new post-Second World War legislation meant to ensure equality. The ambiguous relationship between the SPI and the women's movement as allies and rivals of each other is clarified when Iveković points out the oppositional nature of the movement.

The closure of the article is of major significance from a terminological perspective: whereas Iveković does not differentiate between the use of the terms *women's movement* and *feminism* throughout the article, here she makes a distinction. To her, the two concepts are synonymous—women's movements are based on feminist ideology—and it is a significant development in the Italian

context that communist women support feminism. In the meantime, Iveković clarifies the agenda and therefore the meaning of *new feminism*, which is defined along themes and concepts that are recurrently present in the Yugoslav case as well.

The recognition of different women's movements and, therefore, feminisms leads to the description of the different currents of feminism through opposing pairs in the early Yugoslav publications. These texts categorize feminism according to the distinction between radical revolutionary women's movements (Marxist) and bourgeois movements, on the one hand, and extremist (radical, hyper-feminist) movements as opposed to the moderate (socialist, Marxist) movements on the other hand. The two oppositions are clearly contradict one another and represent a certain socialist conservatism when it comes to self-expression.

Silva Mežnarić, a sociologist and editor of the journal *Žena* who lived both in Zagreb and Ljubljana and was a member of the KDAŽ Croatia in 1972 and joined the feminist group *Žena i društvo*, initiated a series of articles introducing American feminism. The "series" ended after two articles and feminism as a topic returns on the pages of *Žena* only in 1975 with the United Nations' "Year of Women" in 1975, which was followed by the "Decade of Women", lasting until 1985. Mežnarić's first article in 1972 bears the investigative title "What is Happening to the American Woman?"[37] Her claim is that she wants to demystify the way this "socially-ideationally relevant phenomenon" (57) had been presented in the media up to then. She emphasizes that new feminism is not only relevant in the society in which it originates, alluding to the Yugoslav situation, and adds that her aim is not to judge, rather to represent based on the work of other researchers. Using analyses from economics and sociology, the author shows the economic and social problems American women face, including employment and reproduction. Mežnarić's conclusion is that the situation of women in both communist and capitalist modernized societies legitimizes feminist claims.

A few years later, in 1976 in Portorož, at the first official conference about women in which the new Yugoslav feminists participated, Gordana Cerjan-Letica mentioned the problem of the lack of knowledge of and limited access to information about new feminism in Yugoslavia. To her, this is the reason for "so many non-objective and scholarly non-justifiable criticism by us against the

37 Mežnarić, "Što se događa s američkom ženom?" Further citations to this work are given in the text.

feminist movement."[38] In this other publication from the same year, Cerjan-Letica prepared an overview of feminism that discussed the issues of radicalism in feminism.[39] Summarizing the past ten years of American new feminism, she noticed that radical feminists "in the track of the sensibility of the New Left" politicize "the most human and most hidden spheres of human life–such as the family, marriage, sexuality"(8).

Other authors approached American radical feminists with much more caution. A selection of texts by the members of the *Žena i društvo* group was published in a 1978 issue of *Pitanja* entitled "Women, or about Freedom." The issue claims to be about the *žensko pitanje* and not feminism, while most of the inspiring and quoted texts and the questions posed are those of new feminism. The Sarajevo-based social scientist, Nada Ler-Sofronić, provided a thought-provoking new theoretical-methodological framework based on a critical reading of new feminist theory from the West for dealing with women's inequality in Yugoslavia. The selection of authors is colorful and while she is dismissive of Shulamith Firestone for her "extremeness," "overvaluation of women's characteristics" and for overemphasizing "women's nature,"[40] she is appreciative of Betty Friedan. Whereas Friedan is often criticized by left-wing feminists both in the United States and elsewhere for her bourgeois lens of analysis, Ler-Sofronić realises that Friedan criticizes bourgeois values when speaking of the lives of bourgeois women. She finds the idealization of women by the radical feminist Firestone more problematic: authors like Firestone are "mistakenly" called "radical," reclaiming "radicalism" as a synonym for "revolutionary" (21).

Jasna Tkalec also welcomed "radical legislative change," in this case in France. She embraced the French "new feminism" born in the aftermath of May 1968, which had a radical agenda with "the radical demands for the equality of sexual morals for men and women, loudly seeking rehabilitation from a Freudian position of women's erotica, the sexuality of children and adolescents and even of homosexuality."[41] This text, inspired by Edgar Morin's essay in the volume *La Femme majeure*[42] interprets the new French feminism as a human-rights movement (1162), whereas it realizes that, despite the similarities between the feminist discourse and those of Marxism and "decolonialism," women cannot be treated

38 Cerjan-Letica, "Neki dominantni stavovi," 110.

39 Idem, "Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma," 6–8.

40 Ler-Sofronić, "Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene," 21.

41 Tkalec, "Dolazak i događaj feminizma," 1161. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

42 Lapierre, Morin and Paillard, eds., *La Femme majeure*.

either as a class or as an ethnic group. Tkalec suggests looking at women as a "bio-social class" and valorizes the potential of the radical demands within the women's movement (i.e., new feminism), which introduces a specific culture of revolution to the West (1167). The radical demand of the new feminism involves "a reanalysis of the entire social system with regard to the past and future as well. This research raises and actualizes fundamental social and scientific problems and rephrases them in a completely new way" (1167).

A colorful image of feminism unfolds from this range of highly different texts. Revolution in feminism has the appreciation of the authors, while radicalism is already ambiguous. The attributed meanings vary from positive, for example in the sense of "revolutionary," to problematic as much as it is "bourgeois." Bourgeois feminism is unanimously criticized by all authors. Another characteristic of the early steps the new feminists in Yugoslavia took is the strategy of suggesting that at the new manifestations of feminism be regarded as relevant due to the "universal experience" of women from the perspective of the ideas presented and from the perspective of "our still patriarchal environment."[43] Universality is useful not only as a "disguise" of the dissenting ideas, but as a category countering the idea that the solution to the class questions is a solution to the women's question as well.

One of the early examples appears in an issue of *Student*, edited by Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda in 1976 (a rare case in which only foreign material is presented in translation). It includes texts from Robin Morgan's edited volume *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Zoe Moss and Pat Mainardi (from the Redstockings group, which belongs to the above- mentioned "radical" Women's Liberation groups), an interview with Luce Irigaray by Cathèrine Clément that appeared originally in *La Nouvelle Critique*, one text by Marie-Thérèse Baudrillard from *Politique Hebdo* and an excerpt from Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*. What they state in the introduction may not look extremely complicated:

It is interesting to get acquainted with insights of the new thinking of the "problem" of women, her speech (*govor*), agency (*delanje*) and living (*življenje*), and this through a mosaic of broad elements, from analytical-theoretical approaches to personal statements. Though here it is seemingly only about "foreign experience," a lot of this experience of women is universal.[44]

43 Papić and Vejvoda, "Žena je čovjek," 7.

44 Ibid.

The introduction does not identify the selection of texts as feminist, but it also avoids the term *žensko pitanje* through use of "the 'problem' of women," where the quotation marks distance the authors from identifying with those who consider women a "problem." The terms *agency* and *speech* point toward the language of the new feminism as does the selection from the more avant-garde or radical texts, which, by other authors in the Yugoslav publications, are dismissed for various reasons. The reasons for this can be well organized around the evaluation of and reservation to a stream of feminism as radical, revolutionary or extremist on the one hand, and reactionary-bourgeois on the other hand. The identification or appreciation of these varieties of feminism is rather divergent and needs to be treated in the "revolutionary Yugoslav" context.

The choices of Papić and Vejvoda reflect an appreciation of the radical stream of American feminism as well as of the more theoretical, but rather avant-garde, French wave. The tendency to affiliate oneself with the socialist Western feminists and thus legitimate the introduction of these ideas into the local context prevails in the Yugoslav new feminist context, however, in this case there is also an attempt to reconcile the complex theoretical approach of Irigaray (and elsewhere, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva) with an expectation that writing about society serves the revolutionary change in that very society. The cross-reading of radical feminism with French post-structuralism is an "invention" of the Yugoslav feminists and here is made explicit by the choice of an interview with Irigaray, conducted by Catherine Clément, instead of an excerpt from her *Speculum de l'autre femme*[45] with regard to which the interview was made.[46] For discussing the social use of theories, writings and artworks, Clément returns to the concept of *struggle* (*borba* in Serbo-Croatian and *lutte/combat* in French). Clément's choice of the word has a new relevance in the new context of the space defined by the success ideology of the NOB. This was followed by smaller-scale "struggles" for the fulfilment of the aims of self-managing socialism.

Clément contextualizes Irigaray within 1968 as a movement: "Where, what kind of a relation do you think you have with women's struggle? The question is all the more important since your book was not a book which we would usually

45 Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme*.

46 Irigaray's texts are later also published in translation, in thematic journal issues, accompanied by comments and explanation from the new Yugoslav feminist authors: Irigaray, "Ogledao druge žene"; Idem, "Izlaz iz pećine"; Idem, "I jedna, ne miće bez druge"; and Idem, "Taj pol koji nije jedan."

call as one designed for struggles?"[47] Irigaray explains her position, which she begins with the assertion that to her, all philosophical discussions have political implications:

> Maybe we should go that far that we say there is no "politics" of women that does not take shape either in the form of apolitical statements or disavowal of the political, this is already a demand (*zahtjev*) which must be fulfilled. [...] In the meantime, if the starting point of women's struggle (*borba*) is simply to get to the steering wheel of power, then women wanted what they don't [want] to be subordinated to the phallic order. […] However, we need to be constantly and without mistakes alert. Phallocracy most probably still has not exhausted all its resources. Are we not witnesses to how today men overtake the women's question (*žensko pitanje*)? It is important for them to be able to keep the initiative within the[ir] discourse.[48]

What Irigaray does in her *Speculum* is political and radical. Her radicalism is read into a Yugoslav context in which radicalism is read as revolutionary struggle. Through this reading in *Student*, Irigaray is brought into a dialogue with American second-wave radicalism (even though radicalism assumes different meanings in the original contexts of French theory and the U.S. movement) as she identifies the need for radical (down to the roots) change in the discourse conveying power relations. Getting positions in the existing phallic [*phallogocentric*] order does not change the discourse and the place of women within that discourse. The "women's question" gets appropriated by male political actors and immersed into the existing order; Irigaray does not spell it out here, however—her train of thought reminds of the dichotomy between the use of the concept of the "women's question" and the use of the concept "feminism", with the underlying political and strategic implications. As feminism takes the women's question out of the patriarchal context, it means taking the initiative and means intervention into the discourse.

47 Clément and Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik," 7. All translated texts I quote from the Serbo-Croatian translation, since what I look for is the meanings in that context. Where it seems necessary, I reflect on the change of meanings in translation.

48 This is a translation into English from a translation from French into Serbo-Croatian. I quote the translation because my interest lays in the language (in the sense of discourse) the Yugoslav readers were presented with.
Clément and Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik," 7.

Radicalism, and in relation to that, revolution and the revolutionary nature of an ideology or movement, is a recurrent theme in the new Yugoslav feminist writings of the 1970s and early 1980s and is a crucial factor in their self-positioning within the Yugoslav discursive space, simultaneously adjusting to and challenging the status quo. As we have seen above, Iveković, for example, based on Anna Maria Mazzoni's classification, identifies the revolutionary branch of Italian feminism as progressive and points it out as exemplary; however, she refrains from calling it "radical." One of the articles in the hereby analyzed issue of *Student*, from *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Pat Mainardi, discusses the "politics of housework," which is not only relevant from the point of the relations between the private and the public, but also for a statement that identifies the "women's liberation movement" as "revolution."[49] Here we find a conceptually fascinating distinction between radical revolutionary women's movements and bourgeois women's movements, on the one hand, and extremist (radical) ones as opposed to the moderate (socialist) ones on the other.

In Catherine Clément's previously analyzed interview with Luce Irigaray, Clément and Irigaray agree on the need for a radical change of discourse and then they go even further via Irigaray's answer to Clément's question of whether she thinks the "class struggle" would sufficiently describe these power relations. Irigaray points out that this is exactly the reason for which radical change is needed: men "overtake the women's question." Irigaray turns the question around and suggests that class be translated into "men and women" and then adds: "Or, we should admit that today's praxis of Marxism is not willing to acknowledge this difference and this exploitation of women."[50] This takes us to another crucial question dividing the state discourse and the new feminist discourse, considering whether solving the class question automatically solves gender equality and makes women's oppression disappear. Irigaray resists this idea by emphasizing that Marxism, at its present stage, is not sufficient. This is in contrast with the claims of the KDAŽ, even with regard to the International Year of Women, when the problems women faced were thematized, or the introductions in books like Đorđević's *Žensko pitanje*, which treat the work of Marx, Engels and the early Marxists as not very detailed, but in principle authoritative with regard to the women's question and which persistently take the *žensko pitanje* back to the realization of *općeljudske emancipacije*.

49 Mainardi, "Politika domaćeg posla," 7.

50 Clément and Irigaray, "Žena, njen spol i jezik," 7.

Whereas in the local feminist mythology the 1976 Portorož conference does not hold the same place as 1978, looking at the documentation of the debate we find most of the most important ideas of the new Yugoslav feminists there.[51] At this time, Gordana Bosanac and Anđelka Milić were members of the editorial board of the journal and Lydia Sklevický, Vesna Pusić, Nadežda Čačinovič-Puhovski, Silva Mežnarić and Gordana Cerjan-Letica all participated in the conference. Members of the editorial board apparently had to explain themselves for the appearance of the *feministička grupacija* at the meeting, offering a variety of understandings of what feminism is: "it is important to differentiate between the feminist movement in its basic starting point and of a provocation for a fight against the male sex and the […] progressive movement of women who search for a way for their own action […] for the political, economic, cultural and other forms of development in their own country."[52] The introduction, however, emphasizes the importance of the Marxist stakes in the issue of women *and the family*, especially the contributions of Vranicki and Šoljan to the conference. So does the closing speech by Breda Pavlić, with the usual conclusion that, on the one hand, many of the demands of the Western feminists have been provided to women in Yugoslavia and, on the other hand, that if feminists want to achieve their goals, they have to return to Marx.[53] This happens only to a certain extent: there is a left-wing, most often Marxist, inclination in the feminist theories written by the new Yugoslav feminists, but they almost unanimously refuse to subsume women's equality to the class question.

Despite the editorial board's gesture to diminish the significance of the feminist participants, they claim the legitimacy of new feminism. Sklevický, in highlighting the importance of the "history of forgotten sisters," describes the transition from the "old" feminism to the new wave, which realizes that basic rights do not ensure real gender equality, and therefore demands a liberation from gender roles through various actions.[54] The English-language new or second-wave canon was introduced by Gordana Cerjan-Letica, for instance, Firestone; Friedan; Greer; Millett; Margaret Dixon; and Margaret Benston. Cerjan-Letica argued for the alignment of feminism with socialism: "the goal of a non-repressive civilization is there within all heterogeneous left-wing movements,"

51 "Društveni položaj žene."

52 Redakcija, "Portorož i poslije njega," 5.

53 Pavlić, "Ciljevi i metode suvremenog feminizma."

54 Sklevický, "Od borbe za prava do prave borbe."

while refusing to treat women as a class.[55] This, in her reading, makes feminism more radical in its demands for equality. Vesna Pusić addresses the anti-, or rather, post-feminist arguments: at first feminism may appear aggressive or explosive—it may even be accused of theoretical incoherence; "however, if we approach it as a manifestation of one broad, global theory, we will much more easily get the dimension of the universality it contains. In other words, even if it is not a theory in itself, it presents a manifestation and is integral part of one broad theory of social change and dialectical development of society."[56]

By the time the 1978 conference took place in Belgrade, the new Yugoslav feminists became more and more conscious of radical feminism being closer to their own vision of feminism, revaluation what "radical" and "military" means, with reference to the revolutionary partisan tradition as a source of legitimacy. An effective strategy of Vesna Kesić in the magazine *Start* is to compare the feminist movement to the workers' movement. The comparison is triggered by Kesić's annoyance with the "militant" *epitheton ornans* of all feminisms in all times, also present in the state representatives' discussion of feminism. While it is hard to see what it means, writes Kesić, "this is as if the workers on strike would be advised not to choose such a 'militant' way of fighting," and "fighting" here is a "re-vindication of one's rights."[57] Clearly, a political system supporting the workers in all places to stand up for their rights and heralding the workers being self-managers of their lives in Yugoslavia as well as women's equality cannot afford labelling women voicing the exact same "militant" demands. In the very same magazine, Slavenka Drakulić reflects at length on the role and challenges of feminism "as a revolutionary movement."[58] Nada Ler-Sofronić even reclaims "radical" for those revolutionary leftist ideas she agrees with: due to its essentialism, she suggests that Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* from 1970 is incorrectly categorized as "radical" and that it is rather "extreme" feminism.[59]

55 Cerjan-Letica, "Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma," 104.

56 Pusić, "O nekim aspektima," 121.

57 Kesić, "Nije li pornografija cinična?," 74–75.

58 Drakulić-Ilić, "Pornografija u novoj prohibiciji," 68–70.

59 Ler-Sofronić, "Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene," 21.

Conclusion

The quest for meanings of feminism and the possibilities to employ feminist ideas for change—slow and transitional or radical change—in the position of women in Yugoslavia lies behind the early intellectual endeavors of the new Yugoslav feminists. Whether looking at Italian feminism in historical perspective or investigating recent feminist theories and movements, the aim is always to see the relevance of these for the Yugoslav case. The theoretical criticisms shed light on the contradictions within the emancipation project promised by the socialist state and its implementation. It is, however, this promise on behalf of the state that makes the relationship with the feminist groups multi-layered and instead of being dissident (which many radical feminist groups become in other countries),[60] the position of the new Yugoslav feminists vis-à-vis the state is critical or dissenting. This position is made easier by the flexibilities within the Yugoslav regime as much as the access to institutions and publication possibilities is concerned. The systematic reading of theories, especially their discussion and their publication, was made possible at least in part by these infrastructures and the discursive practices and linguistic interventions paved the way for activism. They formulated a critique of the socialist regimes that no other opposition group could. Thus they reformulated the relevance of feminism in the region and by challenging the policies and institutions introduced by the socialist governments to achieve the equality of women and men, they offer a different vision of women's emancipation and gender equality.

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60 Cf. Graycar, *Dissenting Opinions*; and Echols, *Daring to Be Bad.*

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BOOK REVIEWS

Slavery in Árpád-era Hungary in a Comparative Context. By Cameron Sutt. (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 31.) Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2015. 240 pp.

This study, which is based on a Cambridge dissertation supervised by Nora Berend, takes up a discussion—now more than one-hundred years old—about the actual status of persons called *servi, mancipia,* or *ancillae* in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries in Hungary. To put the issue in a wider context, the author first summarizes older and more recent research on the conditions of dependent labor in early medieval Western Europe. As his findings demonstrate, one should be cautious with any unequivocal or general definition of these people's social positions: even historians working with a significantly wider array of sources than those available in Hungary have failed to reach any consensus on the question of whether or not these people could be accurately characterized as slaves, serfs, or any of the other names that have been given to them. Then, in contradiction to the contention that very little research has been devoted to this question in Hungarian historical scholarship (p.1), Sutt gives a thorough and informative survey of the literature from the beginning of the twentieth century to, roughly, the present day (pp.7–18).

A crucial subchapter follows on the definition of slavery (pp.18–32). Much of the debate rests on semantics. Most historians have tended, tacitly or otherwise, to equate the notion of slavery with the Antique Roman slave bands or the African plantation slaves of America. Sutt widens the discussion by introducing evidence from ancient Mesopotamia to present-day (or recent) slave-holding societies in Sub-Saharan Africa. As with other similar comparisons between ancient states or contemporary "societies without writing" and medieval Europe, I am not sure that these are as useful as the author believes. (The debate on this question, however, is far too broad for me to cover it in any detail here.) Sutt ends up with a four-point "definition" (p. 32):

> 1 a slave was property, and as such could be bought, sold, and traded in whatever manner his or her owner desired;
> 2 a slave was separated from his or her kin. Slaves may have children, but cannot establish the broader relationship of kin. Separation from kin found manifestation primarily in the inability of a slave to participate

> in the rights of patrimony. A slave could enjoy certain limited rights to property, and this property could be sizeable and may even have consisted of land in some form, but all of a slave's property was merely part of his or her *peculium*. A prime characteristic of *peculium* was that a slave could not bequeath it to succeeding generations;
> 3 the labor of a slave depended solely upon the will of his or her master. Slaves could be required to perform all sorts of tasks, both heavy and light, but their master alone determined both the nature and the amount of work demanded of them;
> 4 slave marriages were not secure in all societies. This criterion must be qualified because, as we have seen, some societies allowed the legal protection of the union between slaves. Serfs, by contrast, always had such legal protection. Thus, while the presence of protected marriages does not necessarily indicate serfs, the forcible break up of unions does indicate slaves.

With these criteria in mind, the author peruses the laws of St. Stephen (pp.52–90), St. Ladislas and Coloman (pp.91–108), and other Hungarian records, always comparing them to the *Lex Baiuvariorum* and related sources, as well as evidence from Carolingian French territories. This inquiry is prefaced by a chapter on "Árpádian Hungary and the Land" (pp.35–51), which presents the discussions on the nomadic or semi-nomadic character of the Hungarians in the ninth and tenth centuries, the development of ecclesiastical and lay landed property, and their structure.

In the subsequent three chapters the evidence is analyzed topically, according to the author's definition. He presents evidence suggesting that *servi* were regarded as "things" (*res*) (pp.109–22), i.e. they could be bought and sold even without land, that their labor obligations were mostly undefined, though less so on church property (pp.123–30), and that their families (pp.131–58) were systematically split up. The last point is the most contradictory, and is supported by the least reliable evidence. One frequently finds mention in the sources of married *servi* or *ancillae*, but some of these unions may have been between manumitted servants.

On the basis of the very systematic and exhaustive (as exhaustive as reasonably possible) survey of the scattered sources, Sutt finds evidence in the laws and charters of Árpádian-age Hungary for almost all of the points in his definition, although never for all. There is, however, evidence to the contrary as well, even apart from the exceptional case of a *servus* being in charge of a castle (Stephen II: 18). For example, when a distinction is drawn between Hungarian *servi* and others, the Hungarian *servi* are clearly regarded as persons,

even though in another source they are listed together with cattle and tools. Surely, the Hungarian evidence points to conditions fairly similar to those of (earlier) Western European ones, in which there were very significant differences in the statuses of servile populations. From what can be established, the legal division of *liber* and *servus* was unequivocal, but that may not have covered the actual social and economic reality. (As in later centuries, the legal notion of *nobilis* covered great landowners and one-plot peasant-noblemen alike.)

The comparison with "serfs" (already used in the definition and then in the last chapter) is also problematic. To use this category—different from "slave"—in the Hungarian case is highly problematic. Calling the dependent tenants of the later Middle Ages and beyond—i.e. the *jobbágy/jobagio* peasants, who had de facto inheritable plots and the freedom to move (or be moved) to other lords—serfs is definitely misleading. Might it not be more useful, even in the case of periods as early as the first centuries of the kingdom, to speak of slave-like and serf-like dependencies among the servile laborers and peasants, but clearly to distinguish them from the later (from the late thirteenth century onwards) peasants? The attempt to make them *ad glebam astricti* and disarmed (in 1514) clearly suggests that their position was different before (and, in fact, did not even change for the worse in general thereafter).The study closes with a discussion of the disappearance of *servi* (pp.159–210), already touched upon. Sutt persuasively dismisses the influence of the Church, drawing on a wide array of theological sources and canon law. He also offers a good survey of the relevant debates and argues that in essence the *servi* disappeared because of changes in agriculture and settlement patterns (i.e. the end of the small *praedia*).

The book also includes a good index and a map of thirteenth-century Hungary. (It is, however, puzzling how northern Transdanubia became "Burgenland.")

My critical remarks notwithstanding, I regard this study as a very important one. Sutt is right to urge an up-to-date inquiry into this long-debated issue in a European context, and he has made a substantial contribution. By having made both the older Hungarian discussions of this question and his own extensive research accessible to the scholarly public beyond Hungary (the studies in Hungarian are almost entirely unknown abroad, as Sutt notes on p.1), he has done a valuable service for social and legal historians worldwide.

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Koldulórendi konfraternitások a középkori Magyarországon (1270 k. – 1530 k.) [Mendicant confraternities in medieval Hungary (ca. 1270 – ca. 1530)]. By Marie-Madeleine de Cevins. Pécs: Virágmandula, 2015. 308 pp.

The French historian Marie-Madeleine de Cevins is well known among Hungarian medievalists. She is one of the few Western European historians whose research field is in East Central Europe, more precisely in medieval Hungary. She has dealt with questions of ecclesiastical history for the last twenty or so years. In addition to a number of articles and a book on the church institutions in the Hungarian towns, she published a thick volume on Franciscan Observants in Hungary (*Les Franciscains observants hongrois, de l'expansion à la débâcle [vers 1450 – vers 1540]* Rome [2008]), and she also organized a research group dealing with mendicant economy in East Central Europe, financed by the French Agence National de Recherche (*Marginalité, économie et christianisme: La vie matérielle des couvents mendiants en Europe centrale*). The question of mendicant confraternities came up in the framework of this research.

Almost as if showing respect for a long tradition, works on medieval Hungarian history often begin with the contention that sources are scarce either because they never existed or because they did not survive the upheavals of East Central European history. Certainly there are far fewer written sources in this part of Europe than in the Southern or Western regions of the continent. However, there are some exceptions. The subject of de Cevins' book seems to be one of them. Although confraternities are documented in Western Europe centuries earlier, the adoption of this form of piety in the mendicant orders seems to have found much less expression there than it did in East Central Europe, especially in Hungary.

The book consists of seven chapters, including a conclusion and a long appendix of nearly seventy pages containing tables, maps, graphs, photos of documents, followed by the publication of sixteen charters. Between the two sections, there is a fifteen-page bibliography which lists both published and unpublished sources, as well as works of secondary literature mainly in French, Hungarian and English, but there are also German and Flemish titles.

In the first chapter one of the main questions is the terminology, since confraternities need to be distinguished from other forms of piety such as, for instance, pro anima donations. In fact, one of the difficulties is that the sources are not only very uneven, but they also contain very few details. Sometimes even

the name of the beneficiary is missing, not to mention the circumstances under which he or she joined the mendicant community. The first half of the chapter offers a short history of the confraternities and their monastic roots. The second part gives an overview of the historical research with a brief discussion of the secondary literature in English, French, Danish, Polish, and Czech, with a special focus on the works in Hungarian.

The second chapter enumerates the sources themselves, from the normative texts, which are very few in number, through the charters, the registers, and the *formularia*, including the relevant sources issued by the Pauline Order. De Cevins' scope is larger here than the mendicant confraternity charters *stricto sensu*, partly due to the fact that the sources survived in very different forms and under very different circumstances. In this context, she also discusses the problem of conflating the *confratres* with the "simple" *benefactors* of the orders; this aspect is important when categorizing the sources. Finally, there is a short summary of the formal characteristics of the confraternity charters.

The third chapter, entitled "The success of mendicant confraternities in Hungary till about 1530," is the main thematic part of the book. It discusses the chronology, spatial distribution, and social background of the phenomenon. As far is this last aspect is concerned, de Cevins underlines that the nobility is clearly overrepresented in the source material. This is not simply a Hungarian phenomenon. De Cevins quotes the English and Burgundian examples, but she notices an important difference, namely the relatively low number of aristocrats and, in contrast, the strong presence of the nobility. I agree with her contention that further research is needed in order to determine whether this phenomenon was a Hungarian peculiarity or not, but whatever the case, this detail fits well into our image of late medieval Hungarian society.

The following three chapters analyze the process of how one joined the confraternity and the levels of benefices (Chapter 4), the connections between the orders and their confraternities, including the mutual services (Chapter 5), and the religious aspects, the "value" of the confraternity from the point of view of the lay members (Chapter 6).

The conclusion focuses on three aspects. The first is the disciplined use of the confraternity as a religious institution. The hesitancy to issue blank charters contributed to the late medieval success of confraternities in Hungary, especially among nobles and aristocrats. Secondly, this group was particularly susceptible to this form of piety because of earlier monastic traditions (the high prestige of kindred monasteries) and the social demands of the elite. And thirdly, de

Cevins again contextualizes the confraternity in the European framework, and she describes its place in the rich set of the forms of piety promoted or accepted by the mendicant orders.

It is rather unusual that a book by a non-Hungarian scholar is first published in Hungarian. In this case, given both the subject and the author it was auspicious that a Hungarian publisher undertook the task. However, a short remark has to be made about the translation. Obviously, one of the goals was to publish the volume as soon as possible, and the lack of time made it difficult to go through the translated text carefully. In some cases, this led only to annoying grammatical or orthographical mistakes, but unfortunately there are more serious problems. Certain phrases are hard to understand because of the unfortunate phrasing in Hungarian, and a few of them seem to mean just the opposite as the author's intention simply because of a missing "not." Hopefully, the French edition of the volume will also be published in the near future, and historians will at least have the opportunity to check the translation against the original text.

In summary, Marie-Madeleine de Cevins's book yields new insights into the relationship between the mendicant orders and the surrounding society based on a neglected group of sources. She highlights the differences between the behaviors of the orders, as well as the differences within the orders in different regions. Finally, she discusses the subject in a larger European context, emphasizing that the exceptionality of the Hungarian case may be thrown into question if sources from other regions are analyzed, too. The book is the first but hopefully not the last comprehensive analysis of a subject that until now has suffered from neglect.

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A Német Lovagrend Poroszországban: A népesség és a településszerkezet változásai [The Teutonic Order in Prussia: Changes in population and settlement pattern]. By László Pósán. Máriabesenyő: Attraktor, 2015. 312 pp.

Works in Hungarian on the history of the Teutonic Order focus primarily on two issues: the events of the 1210–20s, when the Order held territories in Burzenland in southeastern Transylvania, and the diplomatic connections between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Teutonic Knights. However, the events preceding the presence of the Knights in Hungary, as well as their lasting and significant rule in the Baltics beginning in the 1230s, have not captured the interests or attention of Hungarian scholars. László Pósán, associate professor at the University of Debrecen, has been trying to fill this gap for decades by publishing numerous articles concerning the history of the Order in Prussia and Hungary. This monograph provides a summary of Pósán's research on this subject.

Pósán summarizes the relevant German, Polish, and English secondary literature and provides an excellent complement with a list of primary sources illustrating the major processes and changes that were at work in the region. His work is divided into four main parts, organized chronologically.

The first part offers a broad overview of the Prussian territories and the tribes that inhabited the region before the arrival of the Knights. Pósán provides a vivid description of the harsh and unhospitable conditions of the land, which has proved one of the biggest difficulties for the Teutonic Knights.

The second part presents the everyday life of the Prussian population and prevailing power relations up to the Treaty of Christburg (1249), which is often characterized as the conclusion of the First Prussian Uprising (1242–53), though the fighting did not actually cease until 1253. The treaty guaranteed liberties to all Prussians who converted to Christianity, but it did nothing to establish peace, as many Prussians did not wish to convert and the Knights swore to root out paganism. Pósán convincingly argues that the Christburg treaty brought consolidation to the lands belonging to the Teutonic Knights, as many members of the Prussian aristocracy were won over by the offer of various benefits. Nevertheless, Prussians who were dissatisfied with the rule of their new German lords or simply wanted to practice their old pagan religion undisturbed moved to the territories inhabited by the still independent tribes in East or North Prussia

and Pomeralia. The chapter ends with a narrative of the Great Prussian Uprising (1260–74), a rebellion led by the Prussian aristocracy against the aggressive and drastic transformation of the whole power system in the region.

In the third chapter, Pósán discusses the transformation of the internal conditions in Prussia brought about by the Knights. This process included the reshaping the natural environment by deforestation and drainage, the organized colonization of Prussia with the help of *locators,* and finally the remodeling of property structures. The most significant merit of the chapter is the overview it offers of a pattern of a settler movement (which culminated between 1310 and 1370). The author also enumerates the *locators*, who were entrusted by the Order with colonizing vast but deserted or uninhabited territories. The key initiator (apart from bishops and landlords) was the supreme seigneur, the Teutonic Order itself, which gave *locator*s lands in average between 10–100 *Hufen* (*Hufe* = peasant parcel) to found villages using settlers recruited from Germany and Poland. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the number of Polish settlers and *locators* who took part in the process of colonization increased significantly. Pósán draws his reader's attention to the fact that the Order also tried to lure more settlers from Lithuania in the second half of the fifteenth century by offering far more favorable conditions. In the frontier zones, the Order favored donating properties burdened with military obligation to create a solid background for campaigns. Pósán points out that, thanks to the constant flow of settlers, the Great Plague did not break the backbone of the Orders' economy. As a matter of fact, as was the case in other East European states, the epidemic had only a limited impact on the territories governed by the *Ordensstaat*. Around 1400, with about 480,000 people under their authority, the Teutonic Knights were at the zenith of their power and development. Nevertheless, if one compares other European countries with the state of the Teutonic Order, the latter was not among the most densely populated (8 people/km^2 for a territory of some 58,000 km^2). However, the number of inhabitants and the settlement density were highly unbalanced in different geographical areas. The valley of the Vistula River and especially the region of Kulmerland were more densely populated, even exceeding the averages in Poland and Silesia. 23 percent of the population lived in the 93 cities that had been founded mainly by *hospites*.

The fourth and last chapter deals with wars waged by the Teutonic Knights against Poland–Lithuania and later the Prussian Confederation (the Thirteen Years' War, 1454–66). Both parties preferred or were forced to use mainly

mercenaries, and this had serious financial consequences. Worse, the unpaid mercenaries plundered the countryside even if the settlements belonged to the party that had hired them. Thus, one could observe a catastrophic decline in terms of economy and demography (depopulation in all Prussia reached 40–50 percent) in territories most exposed to military movements: the southern border areas, Kulmerland, and along the Vistula River, areas which were known as the most developed and urbanized regions in the state of the Teutonic Knights. The cost of food grew rapidly, causing famines, epidemics, and riots. Numerous territories never recovered completely from the damages caused by the war. In the first decades of the sixteenth century there were properties which had been abandoned in 1410 and remained deserted. War did not spare livestock either. The tremendous loss of (war)horses offers an additional explanation as to why the Order was forced to use more and more mercenaries after 1410 instead of its reliable and efficient cavalry. These negative tendencies were only tempered by fugitives and peasants fleeing from Lithuania (8,000 people in the middle of the sixteenth century) and Poland. Polish kings always tried to reclaim this manpower on border courts (*Richttag*, *iudicia*), an institution founded to observe the Treaty of Brest (1435). However, quite understandably, since the Order was in need of manpower, it did not show any great willingness to force these people to leave their lands.

According to the Second Peace of Thorn, which put an end to the Thirteen Years War in 1466, the Order lost its most developed regions (Pomeralia, Kulmerland, the region of Marienburg, Elbing, and Ermland), which were ceded to the Polish Kingdom. In spite of being the vassal of the Polish king, the Teutonic Order did make huge and desperate efforts to regain its lost domains (Polish–Teutonic War, 1519–21), but it failed. In accordance with the treaty at Krakow, which was concluded between Grandmaster Albrecht von Brandenburg and King Sigismund in 1525, the Teutonic Order in Prussia was dissolved and Prussia turned into a secular Duchy under the suzerainty of the Polish crown.

Its title notwithstanding, Pósán's book deals a lot with political and military history, especially in the last chapter. However, this does not affect the structure and narrative negatively. Rather, the information concerning political and military history completes and explains the author's statements relating to economy, population, and settlement patterns. The list of primary sources cited constitutes one-third of the monograph. This illustrates Pósán's extensive use of primary sources. These documents allow the reader to acquaint him or herself

with contemporary names, measures, and customs of Prussia. Furthermore, the reader can observe the amalgamation of the languages, customs, and techniques of two different cultures: the Christian Germans and the Pagan Prussians. All in all, the book provides a great overview of Teutonic economy and colonization on the basis of diplomatic sources.

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Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Resolution. Edited by Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. 440 pp.

The factors informing religious and ethnic conflict and coexistence have been at the center of research by scholars in the social sciences and humanities for the better part of the twentieth century, and they remain high on the scholarly agenda today. One of the most complex elements within the dynamics of confessional and ethnic pluralism concerns the question of shared sacred spaces: why do certain holy places become politicized and turn into sites of inter-communal violence among different religious groups at a particular time, while others retain their status of apparently peaceful coexistence? What are the factors that determine the positions of these sites on the axis of conflict and concord, and who are the agents that bring about transformation in the meanings and functions of these places?

Critically engaging with the theory of "antagonistic tolerance" (AT) and moving beyond the "clash of civilizations" paradigm, *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites* offers a unique exploration of the intricate politics of choreographies that emerge around sacred spaces, coupled with cautious scrutiny of the ways in which diverse religious and political motivations are activated and juxtaposed. It does so by focusing on the role of the state and its attitude towards various ethnic and religious groups in fashioning a context of "competitive sharing," as well as on the reactions of these communities to these state-initiated actions. Because it examines the choreographies of daily life both in synchronic and diachronic perspectives, This book is crucial not only to the study of competitive sharing within contemporary societies, but also to new understandings of the issue of religious coexistence in general and shared sacred spaces in particular in different historical periods. As the editors note in their introduction, "historically and in contemporary cases the importance of sacred sites lays [sic!] both in the particular '"choreography of daily life' around the site and in the manner in which public authorities frame the context of relations between religious and ethnic groups" (p.2).

The relevance of the book lies not only in the methodology employed by the authors, but also in the particular cases on which they focus. What connects these shared sacred sites is the legacy of the Ottoman Empire: the places under discussion in the Balkans, Palestine/Israel, and Anatolia were all part of the same imperial formation. Thus, in addition to examining the forces and strategies that

determined how the use of these spaces was accepted, negotiated, and contested, the examples given by the authors offer perspectives that go beyond the glass of "Eurocentrism," since the territories analyzed within the framework of the volume usually do not fall within the purview of scholars dealing with religious coexistence in European societies. The authors focus on three main areas in their attempt to illustrate adequately how boundaries (physical or conceptual) around shared sacred sites were created, maintained, negotiated, and transgressed in the aforementioned territories. They tackle the issue of coexistence, which is the most fundamental category for an understanding of the daily mechanisms and arrangements around sacred sites, and they analyze the particular features of sacred sites, such as narratives, centrality, and indivisibility. They also explore the manners in which state-society relations articulate the division of sacred sites.

All of the articles in the volume merit separate praise, but given the limitations of space I single out a few that I consider particularly eye-opening in terms of their topic and methodology. Karen Barkey uses the example of the Ottoman Empire to demonstrate that one has to move away from previous theories of Ottoman tolerance, institutionalized in the *millet* system, and analyze the vast number of shared sacred sites (churches, shrines, and mausoleums) across the Empire in order to capture the day-to-day complexity of interreligious and interethnic relations. By using the example of a Marian sanctuary in Algeria, Dionigi Albera's work analyzes the historical development of the political and religious context that articulated the "mixed attendance" at this shrine in order to illustrate how particular religious sites could become "reactivated" in different time periods. David Henig's study on Muslim Bosnia attempts to prove that the politicization and/or nationalization of sacred sites through various state regulated mechanisms cannot be described simply as a top-to-bottom process. Rather, one has to look at the "grassroots activities of divergent social actors who intersubjectively construct and negotiate the more fluid meaning and practices involved in actually sharing sites from day to day" (pp.133–34). Wendy Pullan's analysis of the conflictual nature of Al-Wad Street in Jerusalem illustrates how multiple layers of meaning can exist at a particular place, and how one ought to approach the sacred and the profane/secular not as a diametrically opposed phenomena, but as parts of a "continuous but differentiated structure" (p.169). This issue is further developed and corroborated in the closing article of the volume by Rabia Harmanşah, Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, and Robert M. Hayden. By providing a comparative analysis of the Haci Bektaş and Mevlana museums

in Turkey, the authors meticulously demonstrate the role of various state and communal actors in turning religioscapes into secularscapes and vice versa.

By illustrating the pliability of sacred spaces with mixed attendance and demonstrating that the choreography of a particular site results from the complex interplay between day-to-day interactions and political maneuverings, *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites* will enhance our understanding of the peculiar dynamics around shared sacred places and open new research avenues in the study of confessional and ethnic coexistence in different historical time periods.

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Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul. By E. Natalie Rothman. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012. xx + 323 pp.

This work had been a long awaited one, particularly by students of early modern Venetian, Ottoman, and Mediterranean history: the reasons for this excitement were Rothman's widely circulated doctoral dissertation entitled "Between Venice and Istanbul: Trans-imperial Subjects and Cultural Mediation in the Early Modern Mediterranean" (2006) and some of her frequently cited early journal articles that drew on it. Despite its oft-mentioned shortcomings, namely that while turning her dissertation into a book Rothman omitted some of the best parts of that dissertation, and that the monograph falls short of the comparative perspective that its subtitle promises, *Brokering Empire* remains one of the most noteworthy and influential works of the past few years in Venetian historiography.

The focus of the book is groups and individuals crossing various—religious, political and linguistic—boundaries between Venice and the Ottoman Empire in the period from 1570 to 1670. In the introduction Rothman posits that colonial sojourners in the *Serenissima* and the converts, merchants, translator-interpreters (*dragomans*), and diplomats, whom she collectively terms "trans-imperial subjects," operated in a political, geographic, cultural, and ethno-linguistic contact zone in which the now forgotten institutional overlaps between Venice and the Ottoman Empire are demonstrable. However, Rothman claims, trans-imperial subjects also played a central role in elaborating and naturalizing key categories of alterity ("Christendom" vs. "Islam," "Europe" vs. "the Levant," etc.) that continuously recreated the very boundaries across which they mediated. Rothman suggests an investigation of various aspects of trans-imperial subjects as intermediaries between Venice and Istanbul sheds light on the roles of these culture brokers in the process of the creation of "Europeanness" and its relation to Orientalism.

In the four parts and seven chapters that follow, Rothman offers support for these claims. In Part 1 ("Mediation") she discusses trans-imperial subjects as merchants and commercial brokers in Venice. The Venetian state appointed brokers to mediate between foreign and local merchants, and it required them to be loyal Venetian citizens representing the interests of Venetian merchants and, consequently, those of the state. As successful mediation assumed excellent foreign communication skills on the broker's part, former slaves, Christian émigrés from Ottoman domains, converts, and Jews made ideal brokers.

Their appeals to be appointed as brokers reveal the strategies adopted by the petitioners in their attempts to prove to the authorities that they were trans-imperial subjects and prospectively useful "citizens" of metropolitan Venice. In Chapter 2 Rothman analyzes the mediating roles and duties of such brokers in Venice, claiming that while brokers were considered semi-official bureaucrats in Venice, as part of a prevailing practice, they also acted as merchants and were involved in the business transactions of their mercantile colonial relatives as unofficial brokers.

In Part 2 ("Conversion"), Chapter 3 Rothman argues that narratives by and about converts reveal different Venetian conceptions of conversion for Protestants and Ottoman Jews and Muslims. While Protestants were considered as having changed location as a consequence of a purposeful religious conversion, in the case of Ottoman subjects conversion was regarded as an unintended consequence of a transition from one spatially defined religious community to an other. Ottoman conversion to Catholicism was associated with changes in religious practices rather than with spiritual transformation, which sheds light on early modern Venice's understanding of conversion in the Ottoman Empire: a religio-political shift defined by the sultan's patronage of converts and devoid of spiritual commitment. Chapter 4 focuses on Venetian mechanisms in the management of the conversion of Muslims and Jews. Through conversion, these "prototypical others of the Venetian state were transformed into properly constituted Catholic subjects capable of filling the normative kinship and institutional roles in metropolitan Venetian society" (p.161). The *Pia Casa dei Catecumeni*, or House of Catechumens, played a key role in this transformation: administrating bequests, negotiating dowries, and arranging adoption and employment, the House integrated new converts into Venice's horizontal and vertical networks of patronage and clientage.

Part 3 ("Translation"), or Chapter 5, discusses translation and Venetian interpreter-translators, the dragomans. Like the first chapter, this part discusses petitions and rhetorical strategies, this time with the focus on Venice's public dragomans. In their petitions, dragomans frequently stressed their intimate familiarity with all matters Ottoman and their loyalty to the Serenisimma as citizens of Venice. In other words, they portrayed themselves as both local and foreign. In turn, due to their own life trajectories between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, as well as their access to the Venetian elite and the city state's highest offices, they played an important role in defining what "foreign" and "foreigner" effectively meant in early modern Venice.

In Part 4 ("Articulation") Rothman examines the interactions between the groups of trans-imperial subjects discussed in the previous chapters and communication between them and other foreigners. These interactions, which inescapably led to the categorization of trans-imperial subjects into groups defined by people's linguistic competencies, played a key role in articulating boundaries in the Veneto–Ottoman borderlands. Chapter 6 deals with the ways in which such linguistic categorizations influenced decisions about which merchants coming to do business in metropolitan Venice were required by the authorities to reside in the *Fondaco dei Turchi*, or Turkish Exchange House. While the category of the "Turk" came to include subcategories like "Bosnians and Albanians" and "Asiatics," "higher" ethno-linguistic categories were also (re-) defined in the process. Chapter 7 addresses the changes the meaning of the term "Levantine" underwent over time both in Venice and Western Europe. Rothman convincingly argues that in Venice the term came to be used to refer to Christian, Muslim and Jewish merchants from Ottoman and Safavid domains doing business in the city-state. Therefore, she suggests in the "Afterword," it should be acknowledged that the early modern Venetian definition of "Levantine" and the ethnolinguistic taxonomies discussed throughout the book paved the way for eighteenth-century Orientalists, who categorized Mediterranean peoples on the basis of language, ritual, and custom, much like their trans-imperial forebears had done in their institutionalization of their specialized knowledge of things Ottoman.

In recent years, *Brokering Empire* has been one of the most significant contributions to the literature on early modern Veneto-Ottoman interactions. Despite the lack of discussions from the Ottoman perspective, four years after it was first published the book remains an indispensable reference point for historians of early modern Venice and an informative reading for students of Ottoman and Mediterranean history. As Christian and Muslim "confessionalization(s)" and early modern conversions of various sorts—and consequently the processes through which religio-political boundaries were defined and traversed—are currently in the forefront of early modern historical research on Venice, the Ottoman Empire, the Mediterranean, etc., *Brokering Empire* will remain frequently cited and in circulation for years to come.

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Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent. By Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. 253. pp.

One of the most fashionable trends in scholarship today is research on the effects and effectiveness of humanitarian intervention. The subject is particularly popular among political scientists, scholars of international law, and philosophers. They tend to focus on events since 1990, and they usually regard humanitarian intervention as a phenomenon that began to become significant in the post-Cold War era. They generally search for the roots of concepts and practices of humanitarian intervention in legal and philosophical antecedents in Western European history and political thought, and instances of humanitarian intervention from earlier times are mentioned only as illustrations. The book by Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla constitutes a significant contribution to these discussions, in part because it examines the emergence of humanitarian intervention as concept and practice in the early nineteenth century and offers analyses of several case studies.

The first monograph to call attention to the possibility that research on the practical and theoretical aspects of humanitarian intervention in the nineteenth century could enrich our understanding of the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention today with new perspectives and precedents was authored by Davide Rodogno (*Against Massacre. Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice* [2012]). As Rodogno showed, post-Cold War instances of humanitarian intervention could be meaningfully compared with instances of humanitarian intervention that took place in the period between 1821 and 1918.

Heraclides and Dialla share many of Rodogno's views, and their book represents a continuation of his work. The chapters authored by Heraclides, a political scientist and scholar of international law with a thorough knowledge of nineteenth-century history, present the relevant events not through the eyes of a twenty-first century academic, but rather from the perspective of someone who lived at the time the events in question took place. Heraclides offers a subtle and critical presentation of the relevant schools of political thought and the various debates and representatives of conflicting viewpoints, and he puts his discussion in the context of the events at the time. Dialla is first and foremost a scholar of nineteenth-century Russian history. In her chapters, which draw first

and foremost on Russian historiography, she focuses closely on the relationship between legal theory, foreign policy, and public opinion.

According to Heraclides and Dialla, the few people who are aware that humanitarian interventions have a rich array of clearly documentable antecedents in the period between 1821 and 1918 are hesitant to consider these antecedents as precedents. Heraclides contends that they make mention of the long nineteenth century first and foremost when seeking justifications in the past for contemporary doctrines (p.IX). In contrast with the few works that touch on the nineteenth century, Heraclides and Dialla note as a critical observation that, while scholars dealing with the question have recognized that the study of Orientalism and relations between the Ottoman Empire and the European great powers is particularly important to our understanding of the history of humanitarian interventions, they do not consider relations between the empires of Central Europe and the East. And last but not least, Heraclides emphasizes that, in its study of nineteenth-century humanitarian intervention, the research on the subject has neglected concepts and doctrines from contemporary international law (pp.X–XI).

The primary goal of the book is to use comparative tools to present the theoretical and practical aspects of humanitarian intervention in the nineteenth century. The chapters on the theoretical side of the subject consider philosophical axioms and relevant phases of the development of European law. They then present the views represented by experts on international law who dealt with the question, divided up into periods on the basis of the emergence and evolution of humanitarian intervention. Heraclides and Dialla link the chapters that approach the subject from the perspective of practice with a periodization that they establish on the basis of the evolution of international law. The relationship between the two (international law and humanitarian intervention as practice) is significant, since the introduction of legal measures regulating humanitarian intervention is inseparable from the study of concrete cases of humanitarian intervention.

Heraclides offers a clear presentation of how international law grew in part out of the ad hoc international regulations concerning humanitarian intervention. What we refer to as international law was hardly unified or homogenous in the nineteenth century. Numerous contradictions arose from the way in which the ad hoc regulations were contrived, one after the other. One of the signs of this lack of homogeneity is the simple fact that the very term humanitarian intervention only came to be used in a consistent manner in the languages of the

various great powers in the early twentieth century (p.12). Heraclides and Dialla also note that the concept of international law was used in two different ways in communications among the great powers of Western Europe and in their dealings with the world beyond Europe. The manner in which international law shaped relations between Christian states was very different from the manner in which it shaped relations between Christian and non-Christian states (including the Ottoman Empire, Iran, China, and Japan). This difference gave the practice of humanitarian intervention a distinctive legal background.

Heraclides and Dialla deserve praise for having included both Russia and the United States in their discussion, alongside the empires of Asia. It is also worth noting that in their five case studies from the nineteenth century (the Greek War of Independence in 1821–32, the French intervention in Lebanon and Syria in 1860–61, the Bulgarian atrocities in 1875–78, the Balkan crises of 1878, and the Cuban War of Independence in 1895–1898) they treat national histories with a critical eye and at times raise questions and offer interpretations from the perspectives of the Muslim world. The ideas with which the individual chapters conclude are based on a consistent set of perspectives, thus making the events which took place in Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Bulgaria, and Cuba understandable in a comparative context for a lay-reader.

One could make the critical observation that the book is not based on the nineteenth-century great power system. Fundamentally, the site of humanitarian interventions at the time was the Ottoman East. It is difficult to understand why the authors make virtually no mention of the Habsburg Empire when at the same time they offer detailed analyses of the Western European and American responses (from the perspectives of politics, public opinion, and international law). In the discussion of the Eastern Crisis (1875–78), for instance, they examine the reactions of the United States, but Austria-Hungary, which was one of the main players in the events, is given only passing mention. One has the impression that a double standard is being applied: the topic is being discussed almost exclusively from the perspective of the states that would later emerge as the great powers of the twenty-first century.

This is true of several legal phenomena as well. Since Western Europe in the nineteenth century did not consider capitulations to the Muslim world and the cult protectorates that were based on these capitulations part of international law, Heraclides and Dialla also do not consider them part of international law. However, both Russia and Austria-Hungary did, in large part because for them the Ottoman Empire was not a distant world somewhere beyond the seas, but

rather a great power with which they had essentially shared a border for three centuries and a state with which they had had to find an everyday modus vivendi, much as they had had to do with the states of Western Europe.

Sadly, the book is of acute relevance today, at a time when, amidst the ruins of states that have crumbled, humanitarian crises have broken out the world over. The book will be of interest not only to scholars of Ottoman history and international relations in the nineteenth century, but also to politicians and experts dealing with humanitarian intervention as both a concept and practice.

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Another Hungary: The Nineteenth-Century Provinces in Eight Lives. By Robert Nemes. (Stanford Studies on Central and Eastern Europe.) Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. 312 pp.

The Hungarian provinces in the nineteenth century are often associated with backwardness, poverty, and are characterized as places where time stands still. In standard accounts, whether academic, belletristic, or travelogue, provincial Hungary was defined by its lack of the blessings of modernity, or, more precisely, its transition to the modern age has been characterized as severely limited. *Another Hungary* by Robert Nemes challenges this portrait, and thus joins the growing literature that takes aim at the concept of Central and Eastern European backwardness. Through his examination of eight individuals from northeastern Hungary, Nemes sheds light on the "movers and shakers" (p.4) of provincial Hungarian society.

The book is divided into eight chapters, each of them telling the story of one individual. The oldest among them was Count József Gvadányi, a military officer who served in several wars during the eighteenth century, and who, after his retirement, engaged in literary activity and consequently gained considerable notoriety. Ráfáel Kästenbaum, a Galician-born Jewish merchant in Zemplén County, earned respect by designating a huge sum of money in his will for the establishment of a modern Jewish school in the small town of Sátoraljaújhely. The third protagonist, engineer Pál Vásárhelyi, is still regarded as the founder of modern river control in Hungary; in particular, he led work on the Lower Danube and drew up the plans to reengineer the Tisza river. Klára Lövei was a pioneer in women's education and was among the first women to engage in journalism. The central character of Chapter 5, Iosif Vulcan, edited a popular Romanian weekly, and in addition to his Romanian nationalist activism, was a respected member of the middle class of Nagyvárad/Oradea. Ármin Schnitzer, a rabbi in Komárom/Komárno, was also an esteemed member of his community in the nineteenth century. He exemplifies the typical career and intellectual path Neolog Jews trod in the nineteenth century. A lesser-known figure, the tobacco specialist and journalist Vilmos Daróczi is featured in Chapter 7. Finally, the last chapter discusses Margit Kaffka, who is considered to be the first professional female writer in Hungarian literature.

These eight figures convincingly demonstrate the social complexity of provincial Hungarian society: Gvadányi and Kaffka were Catholic, Lövei was

a Calvinist, Vásárhelyi a Lutheran, Vulcan a Greek Catholic, Kästenbaum, Schnitzer and Daróczi were Jewish. The former four were noblemen (Gvadányi was even a count), Vulcan had a mixed gentry and commoner background, while the three Jews were commoners. Some of the eight were (wo)men of letters, while Kästenbaum hardly could write. Yet, for all this diversity, these people had far more in common than it would appear at first glance. All of them were born in northeast Hungary, and while most of them left for shorter or longer periods, they all maintained their social contacts there, and their native province played a persistent role in shaping their mental maps. Furthermore, none of them was born wealthy, and they used innovative techniques to make their own way in society, in particular through their mobility, which was exceptional by the standards of the period.

Nemes' selection of figures is both original and careful. While a few protagonists, such as Gvadányi, Vásárhelyi and Kaffka are vaguely remembered in Hungary, the others have been almost completely forgotten. For those readers who are not experts in Hungarian history, probably all of them are unfamiliar. The result of this selection is that Nemes is able to tell stories that move beyond the standard biographies of notable politicians and artists. He brings the social realities of provincial elites to the fore, draws the structure of their respective networks, and reconstructs their mental maps. He also points to the importance of intellectual achievement as a means for people without substantial wealth to secure a living—a remarkable feature of nineteenth-century modernity was, after all, the increasing demand for people whose minds were their most important resource.

Through these eight lives, Nemes shows that during the nineteenth century, the Hungarian provinces were not merely the passive recipients of modernity. Rather, they produced individuals with original agendas, who envisioned novel ways to forge a different, more modern Hungary—hence the title of the book. To what extent these attempts were successful is another matter. But one certainly can point to some immediate success stories such as the establishment of a modern, i.e. secular and Hungarian, Jewish school in Sátoraljaújhely, and the management of Hungary's major rivers which enabled long-distance shipping and secured arable farming lands. (The fact that these river regulations changed the environment on a scale that would certainly be regarded as catastrophic by today's standards is another matter.)

The micro-perspective of the book, which is its greatest advantage, however, poses some limits. A wider macro-perspective appears only as a

means of contextualizing the individual trajectories. The absence of the more humble classes in the book is remarkable: all of the protagonists represent either the old provincial gentry or the advancing Jewish *Bürgertum*. Even Vulcan could claim partial gentry origins, in contrast to many Romanian intellectuals of the age. Nemes duly addresses the non-representativity of his subjects with regard to the broader provincial population (p.4). Yet, his selection indirectly suggests that the "movers and shakers" of provincial Hungary can be reduced to two groups: the gentry and (Neolog) Jews, which is, ironically, a profoundly traditional explanation. To what extent Gentile commoners contributed to the modernization of the provinces, is thus a question that the book does not address, and indeed cannot address due to the selection of the protagonists.

As innovative as some of the book's may be, and as creative as this collective biography is, Nemes by no means challenges the conceptualization of Hungary, and in particular its northern and eastern territories, as poor and backward. Yet, by pointing out some of the self-made men and women of these lands, Nemes draws a more complex picture of provincial life in the nineteenth century. Given the deep commonalities between northeast Hungary and other peripheral regions of Central Europe, *Another Hungary* is a must read for anyone interested in the emergence of modernity beyond the well-known metropolitan contexts.

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Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State since the Late Nineteenth Century. By Ulf Brunnbauer. London: Lexington Books, 2016. 376 pp.

The history of migration has produced an uneven historiography; the history of immigration occupies the center stage, while the history of emigration barely receives any attention. Similarly, only seldom do studies follow migration patterns over multiple epochs. In *Globalizing Southeastern Europe*, Ulf Brunnbauer makes a significant contribution to the history of migration in both regards. In his analysis of "emigration regimes" in the Balkans from the late nineteenth century to the 1950s, Brunnbauer convincingly demonstrates the benefits of taking a *longue durée* perspective on migration processes. Appearing in the midst of the current heated discussions about migration policy in Europe, this highly original and innovative book is both important and timely.

Focusing on "the relationship between territory, human movement and political interventions" (p.4) in Southeastern Europe, Brunnbauer makes a strong case for the relevance of both the social fact and the topic of emigration in the creation of political communities in the region. Reaching back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tradition of seasonal migration of itinerant laborers from the mountain areas established a "habitual imprint" of migration in the region and prepared the ground for large-scale overseas migration at the end of the century. The transition between various forms of migration was a complex process, in which the building of the Suez Canal in the 1860s played a key role: "Emigration to Egypt was a kind of a preparation for going to America" (p.25). The characteristics of seasonal work-migration—maintaining close emotional and economic family ties and the expectation of return—continued to define both the contours of emigration from the region as migrants travelled increasingly long distances in search for employment, as well as the various political regimes' understandings of the dynamics of emigration.

Weaving together the perspectives of individuals, organizations (emigrant associations, shipping companies, etc.) and states, Brunnbauer demonstrates that the social practice (and later the memory of emigration), as well as the discussion about the relationship between emigrants and the state, remained at the center of definitions of the political community through the succession of state forms and political regimes: in the multi-ethnic empires (Austria-

Hungary, Ottoman Empire) as well as the independent nation-states (Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia), the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and later the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The first three chapters examine the period until the First World War: Chapters Two and Three look at emigration at both ends of the migration process from the perspective of emigrants and the organizations that facilitated their migration and shaped their experiences, while Chapter Four examines the "emigration regimes" of the states governing this region. Chapters Five and Six focus on the interwar period and the socialist era respectively to show the long-lasting legacy of the social reality of emigration even after the heyday of overseas emigration had long passed. Keeping his readers constantly mindful of the regional specificity of the experience of emigration, Brunnbauer argues for the continued significance of emigration for the self-understanding of states governing this region despite their diverging conceptions of the political community (as imperial, national, "trinational" or socialist). Claiming the emigrants in distant places as "their own", these states engaged in what Brunnbauer fittingly calls "transterritorial nation building" (p.321).

One of the overarching themes of the book is the exploration of the dynamics of emigration. Brunnbauer shows how such singular and often contingent events like the spread of the Phylloxera, which disrupted wine production in the 1890s, influenced emigration patterns, and how quickly these effects solidified into self-reproducing patterns. Transnational networks on various levels of social organization (families, associations) turned emigration into a "persistent fact of social life in the emigration regions even when hardly any new emigrants left" (p.82). The social fact of emigration ("transnationalism from below") generated a broad spectrum of state responses ("transnationalism from above"). The responses ranged from strict prohibitions mostly ignored by local officials (Ottoman Empire), to attempts at "ethnic engineering" by encouraging some ethnicities to migrate and others to return (Hungary), and open emigration policies which integrated emigrants into the nation-building project from the beginning (Greece and Montenegro). States displayed genuine concern for the well-being of emigrants, whom they still considered members of the body politic at home, albeit both economic considerations (states had to pay for the repatriation of their citizens) and the interests of the military (young men should not be able to evade military service) shaped state interventions. The extension of the consular service, a direct response to transnational emigrant networks, similarly combined the

controlling and protectionist elements of state paternalism as consuls both assisted and monitored emigrants abroad. Although several states passed emigration laws (Hungary, 1903; Bulgaria, 1907), international shipping conglomerates successfully resisted state intervention and emigrants regularly circumvented passport or other administrative requirements.

The First World War changed the parameters of emigration from the Balkans to the United States on both ends of the migration process. Strict immigration laws in the United States severely limited the number of emigrants from the region, while the newly-founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918–29) (and subsequently the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) faced the challenges of creating a unified state apparatus covering diverse territories and of instilling the sense of a national community in the population. Brunnbauer shows continuities in the discourse on emigration; only those emigrants who fit into the understanding of the national community (e.g. the emigration of the non-Slavic population was supported as was the repatriation of Slavs) continued being considered members of the nation. The First Emigration Law (1921) underscored the significance of overseas emigration by defining emigrants as those who re-settled for work outside Europe (modified in 1927). Emigrant organizations, periodicals, and the establishment of emigrant museums in Yugoslavia further illustrate the role of emigrants in honing the identity of the new state. Emigrants came to literally embody Yugoslavia after its 1941 dissolution, "their double reality—as an ideological project and as a social fact—created a link not only between America and Yugoslavia, but also between the interwar and the postwar period" (p.248).

The Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia initially restricted emigration, before, uniquely among socialist countries, opening its borders for labor emigration. According to Brunnbauer these apparent ruptures occlude continuities and a "learning curve" of the Yugoslav state in matters relating to emigration (p.261). Yugoslavia encouraged repatriation as a "demonstration of the superiority of the socialist system" (p.263), but only selectively, and continued to use emigration laws as tools of "ethnic engineering," encouraging some groups to return while discouraging others. Cultural organizations (*Matica*) kept in contact with emigrants and wrote them into the pre-history of the socialist state as victims of the destitute conditions that prevailed under monarchical rule. Organized on the level of the republics, the *Matica* had a nationalist character, which in some cases the socialist state considered suspicious (like in the Croatian case), while in others it encouraged them (Macedonia). In every case, however, they served as

production sites and repositories of knowledge about emigrants. This knowledge and the continued positive experience with emigrants, whose remittances served as the main source of hard currency for Yugoslavia until the late 1950s, provided a solid foundation for the increasing normalization of work emigration. Illegal emigration flourished; thus "when the government allowed officially emigration for work reasons 1963–64 it was legalizing an already existing practice" (p.298). Opening the borders for labor migration also eased the pressure on the labor market, alleviated the housing shortage and generated revenue. These benefits outweighed the ideological reservations about citizens of a socialist state working in a capitalist system. The "conceptualization of emigrants and the politics of exit played a major role in the process, which ultimately made Yugoslavia the socialist country most tightly interwoven with the West and the world at large" (p.269).

The geographical focus of the analysis shifts across the chapters to follow the migration patterns as Brunnbauer presents an impressive array of case studies covering emigration not only to the United States but also to South America and Australia. The relationship between these various kinds of overseas migrations remains at times unclear, however. While the experiences of the first wave of emigrants to the United States clearly defined developing narratives about overseas emigration, were these narratives confirmed through emigration experiences elsewhere or were they automatically projected onto other places? Similarly, Brunnbauer makes a convincing case for the continued significance of overseas emigration for the emigration discourse even after the center of emigration shifted to Europe; in fact it is one of the most highly innovative aspects of his book in that it shows the persistence of perceptions about emigration despite changing practices. Yet, one wonders whether European migrations did not also generate their own, perhaps diverging but related narratives. Chronologically, the book ends as the *Gastarbeiter* movement (with West Germany as the primary destination for emigration) begins, so perhaps the European migration becomes relevant only later. However, there are earlier moments in the narrative as well—for example, the revision of the 1921 Emigration Law to include Europe as a destination for emigration—that raise such questions.

Overall, Brunnbauer succeeds in "firmly position[ing] the state as an important factor in the emigration story" (p.321). By highlighting the dynamics between the transnational networks of emigrants and the transnational practices of states and the interconnectedness of emigrant networks and nation building, Brunnbauer constructs a compelling *histoire total,* whose relevance reaches far

beyond the history of Southeast Europe. Brunnbauer's analysis of the dynamics of migration systems (one of the main red threads running through the book) and his reflections on the strengths and limitations of migration theories to explain actual migration processes make a significant contribution not only to migration studies but also carry highly relevant messages for the contemporary discussion about migration.

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Zionists in Interwar Czechoslovakia: Minority Nationalism and the Politics of Belonging. By Tatjana Lichtenstein. Bloomington–Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016. 473 pp.

To be a Zionist in interwar Czechoslovakia, writes Tatjana Lichtenstein in her recent book, was a way for Jews to energetically stake their collective claim to sustainable Jewish life in the Diaspora as a patriotic and reliable national minority. Zionism in that place and time meant real participation in the Czechoslovak state-building process as equal citizens. Through Zionism, Jews could "articulate their belonging in the places they already called home" (p.20). Lichtenstein's study represents an important shift away from the usual forms of inquiry into the Zionist project predominantly based on analyses of Zionist congresses, party politics, ideological conflicts, and its manifestations in Palestine. She brings Zionism down to earth as a local workaday project of regular people committed to securing their well-being and dignity in dramatically altered geopolitical conditions. Zionism was, after all, an east central European nationalism—born and bred—and Jews were its stateless nation. Zionists in interwar Czechoslovakia, Lichtenstein argues, set about building their nation through everyday institutions, schools, and sports clubs, where Jewish nationality "came to life" (p.2). Lichtenstein's work disrupts the conventional "here" (in the Diaspora) and "there" (in the land of Israel) examination espoused in modern Jewish national political histories, pointedly reminding us of the diversity of Zionist voices before 1945, and the current limitations of the Jewish political imagination.

Based on scrupulous Czech and German-language archival research conducted in seven archives in the Czech Republic and in Israel, Lichtenstein's book makes a dynamic contribution to the recent historiography of the Jewish experience in twentieth century Czechoslovakia grounded in fundamental questions of Jewish–state relations at the intersection of modern Jewish and east central European history. The state itself takes pride of place in her overall argument as the focus and framework of Zionist activism. She keeps our attention drawn to the inescapable reality that in modern Jewish history the state is the arbiter in the continuous "question of Jews' suitability for citizenship, for equal rights," and that in the center of Europe, Jewish emancipation had been explicitly conditional upon states' perception of Jews' transformation into loyal, acculturated, and moral subjects (p.3). The link between the two became

only more acute in the Habsburg Monarchy's successor states through the cataclysm of the First World War and the new postwar criteria of belonging. The retrospective weight of the soon-coming atrocious revocation of Jewish emancipation hangs over each of the book's seven chapters in their introductory or concluding materials, until the ax falls in the epilogue. Czechoslovak Zionist activists then found themselves in the rare position of having access to precious immigration certificates to Palestine, as they pondered whether to seek refuge elsewhere in Europe, in Palestine, Shanghai, or the Americas, or whether to remain (p.317). The Zionist activist and writer František Friedman, Lichtenstein's protagonist, remained at home in Czechoslovakia, enabling him the opportunity to negotiate the "Czech transfer" of 2500 to 3000 Jews to Palestine in 1939. He died following a grave illness in May 1945 (p.322).

Lichtenstein's book rightly focuses on the Bohemian Lands as the locus of centralized Zionist authority in interwar Czechoslovakia, yet she does not neglect the wider story of the diversity of the state's Jewish population. She highlights the continuity between the leadership of the Zionist movement in Bohemia and Moravia in the last decades of the Habsburg Monarchy and in the interwar period, while showing how the shape of their project was determined by the commonalities and peculiarities of the Jewish experience across statewide linguistic (German, Czech, Hungarian, Slovak, Yiddish), religious (from Orthodox to Reform, traditional to non-practicing), and sociocultural fault lines. She weaves Ivan Olbracht's tale "The Sorrowful Eyes of Hana Karajich" into an illuminating and appealing opener to her first chapter in order to strikingly demarcate attitudes toward Zionism from the west to the easternmost reaches of Subcarpathian Ruthenia where it was simply "heresy" (p.32). The Bohemian Zionist leadership unceasingly struggled to mobilize the Jews of the eastern regions of the republic, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, where the greatest proportion of Jews in Czechoslovakia lived, and where Jewish communities were predominately Orthodox, traditional, or Hasidic. Jews' multilingualism was deemed a "national trait" and "nationally neutral" by the Zionist leadership, which also declared Jewish nationality and Jewish national politics in Czechoslovakia to be a neutral path that avoided national conflict. As Lichtenstein shows, these claims did not bear out, as Jewish nationalism functioned as a buttress for the state's dominant Czech national group statistically and in its political culture.

The book's chapters effectively develop this story of everyday Jewish nation-building practices through meticulous examination of early Zionist interactions with Czech leaders, their utilization of the state-wide census as a political and

tactical tool, how they built revitalizing Jewish national cultural structures on the basis of existing communal institutions, the vital role of Jewish schools and sport in fashioning new Jews, and in a gripping tale of competing nationalist and socialist utopias. At the outset, Zionist leaders gained a pivotal strategic achievement in convincing Czech leaders that the fate of the Jews was important to the newly established state by cultivating concern for Czechoslovakia's image abroad, though this approach revealed the Jews' lack of other compelling arguments. Lichtenstein's longest chapter by far ("Mapping Jews") is a satisfyingly deep investigation of the Zionist turn to statistics "as an instrument for political assertion … [adapting] an important mode of governance and legitimization developed by the modern state" (p.91).

Though she underscores František Friedman's argument that "the right conditions for a sustainable Jewish national future existed in Czechoslovakia" (p.135), Lichtenstein's work is no rosy endorsement of the interwar republic's fabled status "as a uniquely welcoming and tolerant place for the Jews in interwar Eastern Europe." Nor does she present a cheery vision of a homeland in Palestine. Lichtenstein has no banners to wave. But she does offer the grudging assessment that "it is fair to say that conditions for the Jews were better [in Czechoslovakia] than in countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania" (p.327). Hers is an inspiring alternate view on one of the twentieth century's most influential ideologies.

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The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle. By Mary Gluck. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016.

The Invisible Jewish Budapest is built upon a dark and sophisticated notion: namely, that the Budapest of the 1900s, a city that was nearly a quarter Jewish and that many of us celebrate for its vibrant modernism, was tainted by pervasive efforts to render invisible the decisive influence of Jews on its cultural life. Mary Gluck's understanding of what it meant for Jews to be invisible refers to the stigmatization of a Jewish presence by the nationalistic Hungarian establishment, which, even if it did not render the Jewish presence technically invisible, at least kept it "symbolically unacknowledged." In other words, Jews who participated in public life were expected to leave their distinctively Jewish markers at home, which, of course, was also one of the main tenets of assimilation among the Jewish establishment. Because much of the Jewish population in Budapest was engaged in the creation of a secular, metropolitan culture, their influence as Jews was both profound *and* invisible. It is here that Gluck's recovery begins: by stepping into the vivid nightlife, entertainment industry, and bohemian cultural life of Hungary's blossoming capital city, her aim is to rediscover the lost contours of this modern cultural world that was deeply shaped by the "Jewishness" of its creators, but was never named as such.

The irony is, of course, that Jews were never quite as invisible in the eyes of the antisemites, who were quick to identify everything that was wrong and "sinful" (*bűnös*) with the city as Jewish, even going as far as coining the term *Judapest* to refer to the presence of Jews in Hungarian culture. However, this was a calling out that was meant to erase, not emphasize, Jewish visibility in Budapest. For the historian of modern European history, this creates an uneasy moral quandary, because in order to make visible the presence of Jews *as Jews* prior to 1914, one has to turn, beside the elusive stirrings of popular culture, to the writings of antisemites. This observation, however troubling, actually corresponds to the everyday reality of the fin de siècle. Gluck's protagonists—semibohemian journalists, humorists, music hall composers, and cabaret writers—lived side by side with the antisemitic vitriol of right-wing journals such as *Függetlenség* (Independence), the diatribes of Győző Istóczy and his antisemitic party in the Hungarian Parliament, and the virulence of local pamphleteers at the time of the infamous Tiszaeszlár blood libel of 1882–83. While passionate responses to anti-Jewish hatred were carefully avoided in the public realm, on the pages of satirical magazines such as *Borsszem Jankó*, or in the

theatre, outrage and indignation could be transformed into humor, and humor created and sustained a sense of identity, community, and life. It is here that the antisemitic voices received a decisively Jewish response.

In fact, while the Jewish establishment was trapped by the successes of its own mythmaking, never doubting for a second the validity and endurance of their position as truly integrated Hungarian patriots, Gluck's Jewish entertainers stepped away from this public and complacent self-representation. In elaborate caricatures and on the stage of the Budapest Orpheum they created ironic, urban Jewish identities that transcended the inevitable paradoxes of their social situation. Against the background of a strong push to nationalize the Hungarian past and anchor it in a pre-modern, feudal myth of origin that was desired and created not only by the country's political elite but also by literary scholars such as for instance Zsolt Beöthy, Jews in Budapest came to see themselves as cultural insiders, fully in charge of the joyful, humorous, and subversive universe they both shaped and inhabited. In hindsight, their creation was destined to break, but at the time it was a source of strength and sustainability, a way to exist with all life's complexities.

At the heart of Gluck's book is her intricate portrayal of the first Jewish Member of Parliament, Mór Wahrmann, and her analysis of two "pivotal expressions of Budapest Jewish public culture," the *Judenwitz* and the Jewish music hall. In highly engaging prose, Gluck brings to life the transformative power of the Jewish joke as a means to deflate and de-essentialize social and moral agendas, making it the subject not only of a vital aspect of Jewish identity formation, but of serious academic discussion. As Mór Wahrmann also realized, humor was a way to confront and at times triumph over ideology within the narrowly scripted political realm. His "Jewish ambassador joke" rescued him from many awkward encounters, but it also spoke of a deeper truth. In exchange for recognizing that Jews formed a separate ethnic identity—something that could not be admitted in liberal Hungary lest the loyalty of "Hungarians of the Jewish faith" be put in a bad light—with their own nation state, Wahrmann, as the future Jewish ambassador to Budapest in Palestine, earned the right to return home to Hungary. In everyday life, however, this ethnic distinctiveness could not be articulated, let alone lived. Only in the realm of popular culture, in caricatures and on the stage, could an ethnic Jewish particularity be performed and enacted without bringing into question Jewish loyalty to the state. The novelty of Gluck's argument lies in the ways she shows how these seemingly opposite realms of laughter and law converged in the multifaceted *and* invisible presence of Jews in pre-World War I Hungarian society.

As the contours of Gluck's Hungarian Jewish modernism are revealed, it becomes clear that in the world of the fin de siècle, expressions of Jewish difference could exist in the realm of popular culture, but had to be handled "with tact" in the sphere of public liberal politics. The latter demanded knowledge of extremely refined cultural codes, requiring Jews to perform a constant balancing act between silence and rebuttal. Fears of antisemitic violence, such as that which broke out at the Budapest universities in the 1890s, were "ever present under the surface of liberal society," and Jews tread carefully to prevent the eruption of violence from below. What is striking here is how much Gluck's analysis of late nineteenth-century Hungary has in common with what we know about Hungary's post-World War I period. Both the political crisis of the early 1880s, with its accompanying anti-Jewish violence, and the influx of large numbers of Jewish immigrants fleeing pogroms in Russia caused the Jewish question to flare up, revealing the deep-seated unease of the liberal establishment. It is the paradox of Hungarian liberalism: it could not merge its own humanist vision with a lasting and peaceful interpretation of the Jewish question.

The Invisible Jewish Budapest has a truly bold vision that is expressed in subtle, poignant analyses of the many cultural layers of turn of the century Budapest. The six chapters are intricately linked, and, like a novel, the book presents a self-contained reality that impresses the reader with the depth and pervasiveness of its argument. Gluck does not pay lip service to the air of nostalgia that pervades the memory culture of Hungarian Jewish life under the Dual Monarchy (and of the fin de siècle in general). In fact, she has unearthed a vast array of sources that contradict such an optimistic narrative about this era. On the surface, it is hard to find a more patriotic group singing the praises of their homeland than Hungarian Jews during the Dualist period. But Gluck's skepticism is not just a matter of historical hindsight; it is also there in the hearts and minds of her protagonists, who hailed from popular culture, not from the bourgeois or religious elite. Indeed, her semibohemians were all immersed in the gritty realities of everyday life in the city: they tasted the mud and scandal as well as the glamour of urban metropolitan existence; they talked to prostitutes as well as politicians. Mary Gluck's retrieval, indeed, her *illumination* of this lost cultural world is so powerful exactly because it leaves room for its darker side. She has descended into the underbelly of the golden age of Hungarian Jewry, and emerged with a diamond.

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Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler. By Stefan Ihrig. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016. 460 pp.

Justifying Genocide explores German discourses on Armenians, the Armenian question, and the Armenian genocide from the era of Bismarck to the Third Reich. Stefan Ihrig suggests that the Nazi worldview had "incorporated the Armenian Genocide, its 'lessons,' tactics, and 'benefits'" (p.349) into its own understandings on the new racial order that the Third Reich intended to establish. The book is of particular significance in part because denialism and even various justifications of the Armenian genocide have been gaining more and more grounds in modern nationalist discourses today, both in Turkey and elsewhere, as was the case in interwar Germany, where such justifications contributed to the fortification of genocidal ideologies.

Justificationalism, a term coined by Ihrig, is indeed a key concept of the book. It relates to "the 'intellectual' effort and coherent and sustained theoretical attempt to 'justify' genocide" (p.12). Ihrig provides a case study analyzing the discourse on the Armenian genocide in Germany in the interwar period, the *great genocide debate*, as he calls it, on the intended and organized nature of the Armenian genocide and Germany's role in and responsibility for it. This was the first real genocide debate in Germany, and it included arguments for genocide that were then transferred into arguments for the "final solution" of the "Jewish question." The approach introduced by Ihrig will further a broader understanding of the Holocaust, and it will be highly pertinent to genocide studies, given that similar developments took place in other states preceding World War II, particularly the states that allied themselves with the Axis Powers. The book examines a variety of primary sources, from manuscripts to photographs, with particular emphasis on press analysis.

The first part of the book, entitled "Armenian Blood Money", exposes the prehistory of the German understanding of the Armenian question and the Armenian genocide. Germany's position on its relations to the Ottoman Empire changed significantly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, with an increase in pro-Turkish sentiment. During the Egyptian and Bulgarian crises of the 1880s, the German–Ottoman alliance started to take shape. The Armenian topic was one of the key issues that brought Germany and the Ottoman Empire together and created a foundation for German anti-Armenianism and Armenian-

related paranoia. During the Hamidian massacres of 1894–96, a full-blown debate developed on the "Armenian Horrors" in Germany, with emerging pro-Armenian and pro-Turkish fractions. The debate in fact saw the first usage of the German word for genocide (*Völkermord*) in a political debate in Germany, which was accompanied by a growing anti-Armenian and racialist backlash, whereby Armenians, often called the "Jews of the Orient," were supposed to be ruthless merchants, usurers, thieves, fraudsters, and terrorists who had thus brought their own extermination upon themselves (as was argued in articles printed in the *Kölnische Zeitung*).

The next section, entitled "Under German Noses", demolishes a common assertion in secondary literature on the myth of "forced silence" in Germany about the Armenian genocide and demonstrates that official and public Germany during and after World War I was very well informed about the ongoing genocide in the allied Ottoman Empire. A certain "jihadi euphoria" was witnessed in Germany over the Ottoman participation in the war, and Ottoman military propaganda was broadly echoed in the German press. In the meantime, the intended and organized annihilation of Armenians in the allied Ottoman Empire commenced. Official, governmental Germany knew practically everything about the events. German consuls in Anatolia "extensively chronicled the ongoing genocide and voiced their protest" (p.105). Although the government kept silent on these reports, the general public was well-informed. After October 1914, articles on events in the Ottoman Empire became prominent in the German press, as did articles touching or focusing on the Armenian question. From May 1915 onwards, the German press was practically flooded by news on the murders and dislocations of Armenians. Talât Pasha himself spoke about the subject in an interview conducted by the *Berliner Tageblatt*, in which he admitted that during their transfer, Armenians had been attacked by Kurds, and many of them had been killed. He also pointed out that there was no way to draw a distinction between guilty and innocent Armenians, since "[someone] who was still innocent today could be guilty tomorrow." He emphasized that the deportations were a "national and historical necessity" (p.163). Moreover, another claim made in the press was that in fact Armenians themselves were mass murderers of Muslim Ottoman citizens. According to one article, which based its claims on "reliable reports", some 1.5 million Turks had been killed by Armenians. This contention constitutes one of the first instances of justificationalism in Germany.

The third section of the book, entitled "Debating Genocide", presents the history of the great genocide debate in Germany in the 1920s. As the

author explains, after the war three main charges were hurdled at Germany: the Belgian atrocities, submarine warfare, and the German guilt in the massacres of Armenians (for which now we use the term genocide). In 1918, official and non-official Germany began to combat allegations of the role German played in the massacres and deportations of Armenians. The genocidal (intended and organized) nature of the campaign against the Armenians and the German guilt in this campaign swiftly became a central topic of public discourse. Two key figures of the debate on the pro-Armenian side were Johannes Lepsius and Armin T. Wegner. They held public lectures and published extensively on the "systematic annihilation" and "mass murder" of Armenians, and also on the plights of refugees—in other words, the genocide and its aftermath.

The emerging war crimes question also included the question of German guilt in the Armenian genocide. For example, Liman von Sanders, top military adviser to the Ottoman Empire, was accused of having given orders to murder Armenians. Official Germany responded to the accusations by calling upon Johannes Lepsius to publish a collection of diplomatic documents and an overview of German–Armenian relations. His allegedly "open access" to Foreign Office documents resulted in his 1919 publication *Germany and Armenia*, which sought to disprove German involvement in the Armenian massacres and whitewash German guilt. After its publication, for a year or so, the debate on genocide became a central topic in the German press and public discussions. Prominent periodicals, such as *Vorwärts*, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, *Braunschweiger Landeszeitung*, *Vossische Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, published numerous articles on the matter, including the writings of one of the main architects of the Armenian genocide, Djemal Pasha. By late 1919, various German papers often charged the Ottomans with "genocide," the intentional murder of an entire people, however, as Ihrig points out, the pro-Ottoman fractions of denialists and justificationalists still remained in the majority, presenting the massacres as acts of military or "racial" self-defense.

The debate gained even more ground after the assassination of Talât Pasha, one of the three main masterminds behind the Armenian genocide, by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin in March 1921. The case "resonated all across Germany, even in the smallest village" (p.227). Talât would come to be regarded as a martyr of the Turkish nation or, on the contrary, as the "butcher of the Armenians." Tehlirian's trial was covered by the media even more intensively as one of the most spectacular trials of the twentieth century until then. *Vorwärts* saw the true meaning of the trial not in the charge of murder. According to the

periodical, the true charge was "the ghastly Armenian Horrors, not his [Talât's] execution by one of the few victims left alive" (p.235). The trial was indeed more about the genocide than the charge of murder. Most of the experts and witnesses, and Tehlirian himself too, talked for the most part about the massacres and deportations as motives for the murder. Although state prosecutor Gollnick justified the "dislocation" of Armenians by emphasizing that the Armenians "conspired with the Entente and were determined […] to stab the Turks in the back" (pp.255–56), defense attorneys developed a notion of "self-defense," contending that Talât had intended to follow Enver Pasha to Russia to continue the Armenian horrors there in the close future. Tehlirian was eventually found not guilty and set free on account of "temporary insanity."

"What changed in the immediate aftermath of the Talât Pasha trial was that many more papers became committed to a pre-Lemkin definition of genocide […] the terminology became equivalent to that which we would commonly describe with the term genocide," Ihrig maintains (p.271). However, recognition of the genocidal nature of the annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire did not result in opposition to the policy of mass violence; on a large scale, former denialists now turned to justification, characterized by a growing sense of anti-Armenianism, its core argumentation lying in the claim that Armenians stabbed the Turks in the back. Later, the Armenian topic was connected to the so-called "foreigner question," equating Armenians with "Berlin West," "Eastern Jews," and "criminal foreigners" under the umbrella of "Semitic cousins."

The final part of the book, "The Nazis and the Armenian Genocide", explores racialist and National Socialist understandings of the Armenian "race" and its annihilation as a policy of "national interest." As Ihrig maintains, "modern Central European anti-Semitism [was] … the lens through which the Armenians and the Armenian question were perceived by a large portion of politicians, journalists, and commentators in Germany" (p.301). The idea of an (imagined) racial group called "Armenoid" circulated in racial anthropology and racialist literature (both German and international) as "the source of all the racially negative traits that the racist and anti-Semitic discourse identified in the Jews" (p.303.), including Armenians, Jews and Greeks. In racialist literature, Armenians were predominantly described as a "lower race" (Unterrasse), with racial characteristics that were either similar to the racial characteristics of the Jews or even "worse," or they were simply characterized as "über-Jews." Hitler himself expressed similar views.

Although there can be no doubt that the Armenian Genocide held a crucial position in the broader Nazi worldview, it can be witnessed only indirectly through an analysis of Nazi discourse on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's "New Turkey." Opposing generally acknowledged premises found in the secondary literature (e.g. Ernst Nolte's statement that Mustafa Kemal's "national defense-dictatorship" should only be observed "on the horizon of the examination of fascism", see *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche: die Action française, der italienische Faschismus, der Nationalsozialismus* [1963], p.37), Ihrig demonstrates that "Kemalism" or, rather, its interpretations played a crucial role in shaping National Socialism and genocidal ideologies in Germany. An appraisal of a "postgenocide" country can be observed, which maintained that the modern, "*völkisch*" state of Turkey, struggling against the "Turkish Versailles" (the Treaty of Sèvres) and protecting its integrity and national character, had "solved" its minority question on a grand scale and in a "final" manner. In the Nazi worldview, terror and "national purification" were crucial steps of this policy of "modernization", the establishment of a new Turkey and, also, a new (Third) German Empire. Mustafa Kemal's "New Turkey" was often proclaimed as a role model for Nazi Germany. Characteristically, Nazi biographies of Hitler, Atatürk, and other historic "Führers" often identified Atatürk as *the* perfect Führer, and Hitler himself called Mustafa Kemal his "shining star" in the "darkness" of the 1920s.

Ihrig's findings are significant for international scholars of genocide and the Holocaust, and perhaps in particular for historians of Hungary, since xenophobic and genocidal ideas were to a large extent derived from German sources regarding both anti-Semitism and anti-Armenianism in pre-1945 Hungary. Also, Hungarian appraisals of Mustafa Kemal's "New Turkey" significantly contributed to the prevailing nationalist ideologies of the times.

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Szálasi Ferenc: Politikai életrajz [Ferenc Szálasi: A political biography]. By László Karsai. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2016. 524 pp.

Historian László Karsai's political biography of Ferenc Szálasi, one of the most controversial historical personalities in twentieth-century Hungarian history, was published seventy years after the fall of Szálasi's Arrow Cross regime and his subsequent execution for his war crimes. Karsai claims in his introduction that he has been dealing with Szálasi's biography for nearly three decades, and after many previous publications and several professional discussions this book ought to be seen as the culmination of his work. The book, which comes to 524 pages, is divided into thirteen chapters, which introduce Szálasi's life in chronological order, discussing his origins, family circumstances, birth, and childhood, concluding with his arrest in 1945. Moreover, the last chapter provides a detailed description of his conduct at the court of law and his eventual conviction. The main body of the text is complemented with a brief appendix: a chronology, sources, an annotated bibliography of secondary literature, and a list of explanations of terms which Szálasi invented, such as "life-community" ("életközösség") or "blood-home" ("vérhaza"). The index of names also contains profiles of people who were closely associated with Szálasi.

The contested question related to Szálasi's role in history is not whether he played a positive or a negative role; it was rather easy to recognize that his state ideology was in contradiction with the values of European civilization, and Karsai`s work offers eloquent proof of this. The real value of this book rather lies, in addition to the many details it provides, in the questions Karsai raises and the answers he offers concerning Szálasi's popularity and his manner of attaining power. At one time, historians argued that Szálasi's national socialist party became popular in Hungary towards the end of the 1930s because it received financial support from Nazi Germany. In more recent years, historians have refuted this contention and have shown that Germans had practically no connection to Szalasi's party until the spring of 1944. Szálasi neither asked nor received any financial help from Germany. His popularity was much rather closely connected to the Arrow Cross Party's social mission and policy. Karsai and his colleagues have analyzed a source which had not been investigated previously: the Arrow Cross's official personal certificates concerning 27,500 of its members, or almost ten percent of all registered members. Earlier, a stereotype had gained widespread acceptance according to which there were many criminal elements,

deadbeats, and deviants among the members of the party, while others were recruited from the less educated strata. According to Karsai, this is a historical misconception: there might have been a slight overrepresentation of lower class people among party members, but alongside the blue-collar workers there were also white-collar workers, and the party clearly had its share of office holders and public servants.

Karsai provides clear descriptions of Szálasi's character and reflects on his serious neurotic disorder, which found manifestation, above all, in his paranoia and sense of mission. This neurotic disorder was the source of two serious symptoms: his fanaticism and his loss of a sense of reality. Karsai offers several examples of Szálasi's madness: beginning in the early 1940s, Szálasi's close contacts thought their leader suffered from insanity and needed to be examined by a doctor. However, these symptoms did not mean that he never was or never appeared to be rational. They might even have helped his political cause because his followers thought that behind Szálasi's addle-brained deeds and speeches lay something magical, a form of superior leadership, which they therefore simply could not fully comprehend. For all that, not unlike other fascist leaders, in his private life Szálasi was able to present himself as an agreeable person. Otherwise, however, he was neither an eminent political leader nor a particularly charismatic man. He won popularity and a position as a leader not due to his personal abilities, but much rather because of the historical and political circumstances. The main reasons were the economical crisis and the difficulties of the wartime situation.

Karsai analyses in detail Szálasi's pronouncements on the "Jewish question," which did not contain any plans of physical annihilation. In his first programmatic pronouncements from 1933–35, he did not formulate any Jewish policy. His public anti-Semitism was noticeable from 1936 onward, and by 1938 this topic appeared to be of utmost importance to him. Szálasi did not call his brand of racism anti-Semitism, but rather preferred the term A-semitism. Karsai maintains that Szálasi adopted the expression from the Jesuit Béla Bangha's 1920 publication *Magyarország újjáépítése és a kereszténység* [Hungary's Reconstruction and Christianity], but the expression is not actually used in the book. According to Szálasi's own explanation, the term expressed the idea that Hungary needed to be released from the influence of Jews. In his opinion, anti-Semitism only referred to "the little or common Jews," but never to those in the background. In contrast, A-semitism indicated that Hungary was to be purified of the alleged Jewish influence, but not in a physical way, because Jews would have to be given a chance to create a new world for themselves. At the same time, Szálasi and his

party's leaders never articulated any detailed plans of deportation from Hungary. Accordingly, Karsai emphasizes that the ghettoization and deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz was not committed under Szálasi's rule, but took place under the Sztójay government (which was in power between March 22 and August 29, 1944). In other words, the Sztójay government fulfilled German expectations in matters related to the Holocaust, whereas Szálasi contradicted them in some cases.

Szálasi strongly connected the Jewish issue to his economic platform, and he propagated the idea that all properties belonging to Jews be handed over to Christians. He wanted to create a workers' state and a workers' society in which the nationalization of assets would be part of a system in which workers would be paid according to their levels of efficiency. The economic programs presented by Szálasi and his experts contain many demagogical phrases (such as "avoiding economic bankruptcy" and "fixing the prices and the wages"), and they hardly ever explain the actual mechanisms with which they would be implemented.

Szálasi considered Hungarian and German National Socialism coequals. He refused the theory of racism, and he maintained that German Nazism was almost like "Jewish ideology," since both aimed at world domination. The result was that, in contrast to other politicians in Hungary, he did not want to subordinate Hungary to Germany's demands. Szálasi thought that the national socialist powers of Europe needed to establish regional dominance and cooperate with one another. Germany had taken control of Austria and the Czech lands, and Hungary should possess its own region too, including some parts of Yugoslavia and their ally Poland. According to him, the Hungarians were the sole state-founding nation in the Carpathian basin, and the new political structure should be shaped by this fact.

Until as late as April 1945, Ferenc Szálasi believed that the national socialist powers would win the war. He simply considered it impossible that the "Jewish-liberal states" could defeat them. He firmly believed in the superiority of states based on the nationality principle, much as his belief in his own "nation-saving" abilities was unfaltering. László Karsai's political biography thus clarifies that Szálasi suffered from a kind of personality disorder. His career was that of a fanatical political leader who thought of himself as the savior, believed exclusively in his own views, and had no understanding of the values of a democratic state or human rights.

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The State, Antisemitism, and Collaboration in the Holocaust: The Borderlands of Romania and the Soviet Union. By Diana Dumitru. New York: Cambridge University Press; published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016. XVIII+268 pp.

The book is an extended version of the article Diana Dumitru coauthored with Carter Johnson that received the American Political Science Association's Mary Parker Follett Award for the best article or essay published in 2010–11. Its main argument can be summarized as follows: during World War II, the local gentile population in the two borderland areas—Bessarabia and Transnistria—exhibited strikingly different attitudes: more hostile in Bessarabia and more compassionate in Transnistria. The popular violence against Jews in Bessarabia began before the arrival of the German and Romanian troops and reached its peak in the first days and weeks of Romanian rule. This violence took different forms—from beating, plunder of property and expulsion from homes to providing assistance for the troops and gendarmes as they massacred and/or interned Jews in concentration camps. Dumitru sees little evidence that this violence was confined to particular social or age groups of males, and she suggests that perpetrators were statistically representative of the local male population as a whole (esp. pp.155–57). In contrast, there were virtually no cases of "spontaneous" popular violence against Jews in Transnistria. In the great majority of cases, when locals participated in the murder of Jews, they did so on the express orders of the occupiers and as members of an occupier-created police force. Dumitru also draws on the enormous amount of postwar testimony of Jewish survivors to argue that they encountered much more sympathy and willingness to help in Transnistria than in Bessarabia, where the rare cases of assistance were almost exclusively confined to the narrow circle of personal and family friends (esp. p.207).

These observations do not provoke any disagreement. Indeed, it has been known for quite some time that the western borderlands of the Soviet Union, in particular areas annexed in 1939–41, were the sites of the most widespread, deadly, and systematic popular violence against Jews at the beginning of World War II and that the more one moved to the east, the less violently anti-Semitic local gentiles tended to be (see, for example, Yitzhak Arad, "The Local Population in the German-Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union and Its Attitude toward the Murder of the Jews," in David Bankier and Israel Gutman, eds., *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution* [Jerusalem: International Institute for

Holocaust Research, 2003], discussed on pp.186–87). For Dumitru, however, these findings are the starting point for her search for the factor(s) that might explain these differences. As Dumitru ascertains, the levels of anti-Semitism and proclivitires for anti-Jewish violence were approximately the same in both Bessarabia and Transnistria before the Great War, so references to long-term anti-Semitism in the region cannot explain the differences in the provinces' records during World War II. She also discusses various theoretical models of interethnic violence that downgrade the importance of ideology and discards all of them as inapplicable to these cases. Instead, she insists, it was the policies of the Soviet state during the interwar period that substantially weakened (if not completely eradicated) popular anti-Semitism in Transnistria and instilled the values of the equality of all ethnicities and the sense that they all belonged to the Soviet community. Dumitru enumerates persistent Soviet efforts to fight popular anti-Semitic prejudices by means of propaganda; the promotion of positive images of Jews in popular cultural artifacts such as movies, songs, posters, and school education; and the judicial prosecution of expressions of anti-Semitism as counter-revolutionary crimes. These efforts bore fruits during World War II.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, Dumitru's argument goes, Greater Romania was a nationalizing state in which ethnic nationalism served as a national ideology, while xenophobia and anti-Semitism were widespread. She marshals an impressive array of evidence to prove that anti-Semitic prejudices in Bessarabia were persistently propagated by political actors, priests, and teachers, who routinely presented anti-Semitic convictions as a sine-qua-non attribute of a "good Romanian." Thus, at a time when anti-Semitism was weakened in Transnistria, it took stronger hold of the popular mind in Bessarabia.

Nothing of this is wrong and little is new. Nevertheless, Dumitru's major thesis must be considerably modified for it to be plausible. First and foremost, her insistence that the Soviets' efforts to eradicate anti-Semitism combined with the accelerated intermixing of various ethnic groups in the period of forced industrialization and collectivization of agriculture prompted gentiles to become more accepting of and less hostile to the Jews ascribes to "the state" an unpersuasively strong power to reshape the popular imagination in a relatively short period of time. In the debate between historians such as Jochen Hellbeck, who describes the "productive" capacity of the Soviet regime to form, with the participation of their subjects, "illiberal subjectivities" of the latter, and scholars who, like Sheila Fitzpatrick, reveal the widespread use of the practices of "wearing masks" and "speaking Bolshevik" by the Soviet citizens, who

remained largely impervious to the Soviet ideology, Dumitru takes the side of the former (pp.10–11). The problem with this assumption is that the experiences of war and occupation revealed the superficiality and fragility of the supposed "Sovietness" of many a Soviet citizen.

The rejection of basic Soviet ideological premises signified the regime's failure to reshape its subjects' mentalities to conform to its set of values. This rejection manifested itself through joyous welcome of German and German-allied troops in many Soviet locales (not only western ones); the mass surrender of Red Army men, especially in the early stages of the war; the enormous number of Soviet subjects who joined various military formations to fight against the Soviet power; the occupiers' quick destruction, with the enthusiastic cooperation of locals, of the guerilla groups that the party, the army, and the NKVD had left behind to fight in the enemy's rear; mass collaboration with the enemy in various forms, from innocuous to criminal; popular clamor for the unimpeded exercise of religious practices, the dismemberment of *kolkhozes*, and for free trade and other forms of private enterprise, to list only a few. Even the return of Stalin and the party leadership to traditional Russian nationalism to bolster its legitimacy during the war, their partial reconciliation with the Orthodox Church, and their use of unprecedentedly brutal measures to sustain the combat abilities of their troops testify to the weak influence communist ideology had exerted on the popular imagination and popular strategies of identity creation and maintenance. In view of these facts, which are all now well-documented, how could the regime succeed in eradicating anti-Semitism when it failed in every other aspect of the project of "forming a new man"? Unfortunately, Dumitru ignores this question.

She is on even shakier ground when she extrapolates from the supposed Soviet success the ability of a generic "state's" potential to fight popular prejudices successfully and improve interethnic relations (p.9). What is missing here is sufficient awareness of the profound differences between various states, including the structures of their institutions, practices, and ideologies and the variations of their influence on societal forces. The Soviet state was unlike the others. Effectively, it was ruled by a small minority committed to the reconstruction of Russian society and, ultimately, of humanity as a whole. As such, this state confronted what it believed were backward and "reactionary" prejudices and practices headlong, without regard for public opinion. It also prescribed a particular type of education in schools all over the country, censored the press and other mass media, promoted publications that taught its ideology, and spread entertainment materials that suited its aims while forbidding materials

that might have thwarted them. It could and did use unprecedented violence against ideological deviants. Most states do not have such powers, and rarely do they aspire to acquire them.

The latter was true of Greater Romania, also a fact of which Dumitru seems at times to be oblivious.Most of the anti-Semitic propaganda in Bessarabia was conducted not by "the state," but by autonomous societal actors whom the governments could not control. Even if a part of government's bureaucracy, police force, and army did display sympathy with and even supported anti-Semitic movements, the governments themselves usually took a more reserved and even hostile attitude toward anti-Semitic movements, subjecting them to administrative pressure and police repression. Anti-Semitic ideology was propagated and sustained by opposition forces much more than by "the state" itself. The forcefulness of anti-Semitic ideology and the density of networks of Judeophobic activists in Bessarabia were the result not so much of an intentional policy as of the inefficiency and restraint of the Romanian state. Romanian governments failed to curb the tide of popular anti-Semitism, sustained by the efforts of numerous public intellectuals, journalists, priests, demagogues, half-educated exalted youngsters, and resentful opportunists of all sorts. They did not promote it.

In the interwar period, Greater Romania was, of course, not an exception but a norm among the countries of East Central Europe, in which official nationalism, economic hardship, and the inefficiency of state institutions combined to facilitate the spread of extremist xenophobic and anti-Semitic movements. The real exception was the Soviet Union, not so much because of the Soviets' efforts to fight interethnic prejudices and teach equality and collaboration as because of the simple fact that the regime did not tolerate any autonomous social or political activity. The combination of twenty-two years of unprecedented repression, close surveillance, never-ending harassment, social upheavals, and material privations demobilized Soviet society, disabused Soviet citizens of any notion of independent initiative, and broke virtually all networks of friendship and trust among them. This, however, did not make Soviet citizens committed communists or progressive internationalists.

Indeed, against this background it is not at all surprising that Transnistria did not witness spontaneous outbursts of anti-Jewish violence, for the simple reason that no spontaneous activity following the takeover was registered, except perhaps expressions of loyalty to the new regime and willingness to collaborate with it. However, expulsion of Jews from their dwellings, their incarceration,

and their mass murder did not encounter open opposition, apart from isolated cases when women in some Ukrainian villages shamed soldiers and policemen for their inhumanity. Romanian sources are unanimous in assessing the locals' reaction to the persecution of Jews as exceedingly positive, even celebratory. Their appropriation of the property of murdered Jews is well documented, as is the participation of local policemen in organizing and carrying out executions of Jewish internees.

It would be unhelpful to deny that certain parts of Transnistria's gentile population did exhibit some greater influence of Soviet education and propaganda on their behavior, including their willingness or inclination to help Jews. Younger people demonstrated stronger pro-Soviet inclinations, and the efforts made by some of them to help rescue Jews are well documented. However, Ukrainian peasant women—another demographic that is prominent in the accounts of attempts to provide assistance—and local Orthodox priests—who, unlike priests from Romania, were noted for their willingness to baptize Jews in spite of the authorities' strict ban on such acts, which were meant to offer Jews a cover against persecution—were likely moved by motives other than Soviet-type internationalism.

Explanations that rely on a single cause rarely work in the study of history, and Dumitru's book, despite its many strengths (which include a wide source base and substantial historiographical knowledge, theoretical awareness, and clarity of exposition), ultimately confirms this truism. The correct answer to the central question of the book would inevitably be multifaceted and knotty. However, by forcefully making her case, Dumitru's book is certain to provoke further research and debate, which is, in itself, a serious achievement.

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Die große Angst: Polen 1944–1947. Leben im Ausnahmezustand. By Marcin Zaremba. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2016. 629 pp.

Die große Angst (the Polish title is *Wielka trwoga*, which in English means *Great Fear*), published originally in Polish in 2012 and appearing in German translation in 2016, is a highly important contribution to the field of Polish postwar historiography as it represents one of the very first studies on the history of emotions in Poland. The book highlights the constitutive role of fear and anxiety in shaping Polish postwar society. The key concept of the book, *trwoga*, is rather difficult to translate into English or German; it basically refers to the emotions and social tensions that emerged as a consequence of the dramatic wartime events, prevailing uncertainty, and the material threats of the postwar months, as well as the radical processes of social change and the brutal transition of power.

One of the virtues of the book is that Zaremba does not provide any simple answers, presenting rather a complex survey of diverse phenomena. He also avoids the pitfalls of the Polish martyrological tradition. With some of his remarks, Zaremba takes a rather moderate position in the relentless debates on the controversial arguments of Polish-American sociologist Jan Tomasz Gross, who just a few years ago published a book about Polish anti-Semitism after Auschwitz entitled *Fear*.

In twelve chapters, Zaremba analyses different fields of social activity and many possible reasons for the widespread traumas in the years between 1944 and 1947. He begins with some remarks about the phenomenon of generally pervasive fear in the Polish culture of the first half of the century, which often found expression in a mental act blurring or erasing the conceptual borders between Bolshevism and Judaism. Second, he takes a look at the situation in Poland immediately after the end of the war, where he finds a combination of relief, joy, and anxiety within Polish society. The conflicts between different actors, the prolonged chaos and, especially, the behavior of the invading Red Army had a very strong negative influence on the common mood.

The book describes different uprooted social groups in a lively manner: deserters, beggars, speculators, and policemen. The juxtaposition of several centers of power and the fight for "the survival of the fittest" manifested itself in a wave of plunder and common banditry. Nothing seemed to be forever; a feeling of temporality was omnipresent. Hunger, high prices, and diseases

made the life of the common Pole almost unbearable. Zaremba shows that in the middle of this period of lawlessness and hopelessness there was enough room for the resurgence of pre-war stereotypes and the bashing of even weaker social and, especially, national groups. The search for culprits for the crisis, or, more simply, for defenseless victims, engulfed wide segments of the population, including people who had survived the war with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

One of the most impressive features of the book is the regional range of Zaremba's research and the richness of historical detail. Because of the author's extensive archival work, he can offer a panorama of the entire country, not only select regions. Zaremba has trudged through huge numbers of printed and unprinted sources. Letters which are cited in the text at great length offer especially valuable insights into the postwar everyday life of members of all of the social classes. However, this strength of Zaremba's narrative could also be called its biggest weakness. The letters can rarely be properly contextualized, and their authors usually remain anonymous. Beyond this, from a German perspective of the early twenty-first century, it is quite unusual to read so many drastic descriptions of Soviet cruelty to Poles. There is not always a sound reason to dwell on people's misfortunes. One might recognize in that practice some—far from praiseworthy—parallels with the (politically motivated) publication of the *Documentation on Crimes Perpetrated against Germans in Connection with Their Expulsion* in West Germany since the late 1950s.

If Soviet influences are one of the main topics of *Die große Angst*, another is the role of rumors and anti-Semitism. In times of insecurity and in the context of a missing base for reliable communication, rumors and their spread acquire great importance. This applies in particular to the remaining members of the national minorities. Here, Zaremba chooses as a central topic the behavior towards the surviving Jews. By doing so, he explicitly takes part in the international debate, for instance by adopting a position with regards to the controversial texts of Jan T. Gross. Zaremba focuses not so much on economic motives for the killing of Jews, but rather stresses the subliminal continuing effects of old ritual murder legends as a cause for pogroms. One could doubtlessly discuss further whether Zaremba's argumentation plays down material and racist motivations. In any case, in the larger context of discussions among historians, the author adopts a rather centrist position.

The passages in which Zaremba discusses eschatological fears and religious fundamentalism are of special interest too. Here, he clearly antagonizes other

scholars, who place unilateral emphasis on the material background of fears. Zaremba argues, in contrast, that irrationalism and so-called superstitions merged with the traditional mindset of the Roman Catholic Church to form an unholy alliance against supposed strangers.

To be sure, one could assess the structure of the book rather critically. Apart from the ubiquitous discussions of fear, the main line of argument is not always clearly indicated. As a whole, however, the book still reads very well and is never uninteresting. It is also a book free of ideological grimness and regimentation, which makes it all the more pleasant to read. For instance, it is highly stimulating to read Zaremba's criticism of the myth of the "cursed soldiers" (żołnierze wyklęci), who tend to be depicted as historical heroes by the current national-populist government of Poland, even though many of them were ordinary criminals.

A study about pervasive fear, which examines emotions and their role in processes of social transformation, almost inevitably tends to underestimate other causes of the crisis of the postwar and civil war years. However, an author always has the right to make his choices. It was obviously not Zaremba's intention to consider international comparisons in a sustained way either. One could argue that, had he done so, this would have allowed him to grasp much more clearly that fear actually constituted a pan-European phenomenon. For a long time, *German angst* remained the sole topic of discussion, and only recently has Pierre-Frédéric Weber shown how the fear of Germany determined European politics after World War II (*Timor Teutonorum: Angst vor Deutschland seit 1945: eine europäische Emotion im Wandel* [2015]). Such emotions were not only felt in Poland with regards to military considerations (where it took the various forms of fear of a new war, the military dominance of the Soviet Union, and the possible return of the Germans). A comparison with Great Britain or Greece, and their efforts to deal with hunger after 1945, might well have shown that Poland simply did not constitute an exceptional case in history, though Zaremba continuously makes and relies on this questionable line of argument throughout his book.

The basis of this review is the 2016 German edition of the book, which, on the whole, it of high quality, although the translator, Sandra Ewers, sometimes uses expressions at odds with accepted historical terminology and—especially—geography. The translator was not always able to decode the place names which have been used in the genitive in the Polish text. To provide only one example, the Polish word *Pomorze* should definitely not be translated with the German *Pommern*; *Pommerellen* would have been the correct choice.

Apart from some publications on the history of World War II, and in particular on the fate of the Jews and the behavior of Poles towards them, there have not been many internationally successful books by Polish historians in recent years. Marcin Zaremba's book on fear and anxiety as constitutive and decisive parts of Polish postwar society might represent an exception, as it offers, despite its weaknesses, profound insights into early postwar Polish society.

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